

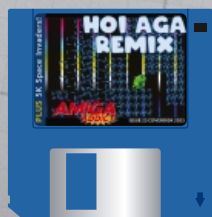
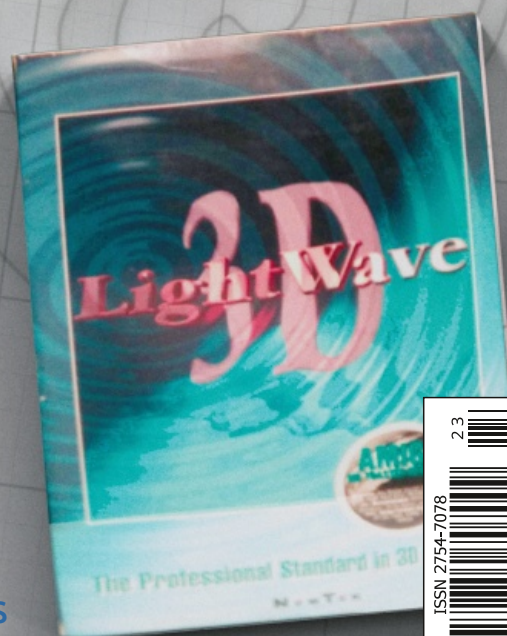
PAINTING WITH LIGHT IN THE X, Y & Z DIMENSIONS

AMIGA[®] ADDICT

£6.50 ■ 2023 ■ ISSUE 23



The Story of LightWave



PLUS

- ▶ ROGUECRAFT GAME PREVIEW
- ▶ AMOS CODING TUTORIAL
- ▶ CLASSIC GAMING WITH THE BLUES BROTHERS & ALIEN BREED II: THE HORROR CONTINUES





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MEET THE ADDICTS

We give the acronym "AA" a whole new addictive meaning...



The First Personal Computer That Gives You A Creative Edge

It's easy to forget, especially here in Britain, that the Amiga wasn't originally marketed as a games machine. At launch, the computer was predominantly aimed as a tool for artists (you can read more on this back in Issue 20). However, the Amiga's graphical capabilities were so exceptional that the platform served as a natural fit for budding software developers to truly express their creativity. And what better way to package the many facets of art than using emotive music, imaginative storytelling, user interaction and stunning graphics within a polished game?

But the Amiga also outperformed in other areas than just gaming. It was years ahead of its time. As you probably know, the Amiga has always had incredible 3D modelling and rendering capabilities. (*Ian* - "Of course it does!") But, I often wonder if the computer we love so dearly was its own worst enemy; too good at everything to excel in any specific field? With the masses often disregarding it as "just a games console", its computing power was easily overlooked. Amiga never really got the mainstream respect and creative industry credibility it deserved until recently. Despite this, the hardware did have its champions in the visual arts sector - professional artists who understood what the machine could achieve. So, with all that said, let's turn to page 32 for a prime example of what Amiga is capable of. *LightWave 3D* is a powerful software package which has always been regarded highly by professional 3D artists, being frequently used commercially for CGI special effects in hit movies and TV shows. Thank you to our 3D expert Gareth, who guides us through *LightWave*'s fascinating and entertaining journey. I'm sure the article will get your creative juices flowing.

We're also excited this issue to get an insight into Badger Punch's upcoming isometric game, *Roguecraft*, which our games editor James is eager to get his hands on. This is bound to be one of the biggest Amiga titles this year. It's worth mentioning here that an early playable demo has surprisingly surfaced online as part of the AmiGameJam 2022 - whilst it may only be an early alpha release for testing purposes, it's still very impressive! On page 42, James sits down with the team over at Badger Punch to catch up on how development is going and what we can expect from the final release.

Team AA are fortunate to have been joined by a host of other special guests this month too. Our good friends from the Amigos podcast chat with us on page 26, as does the ex-designer of *The Australian Commodore And Amiga Review* publication (see page 22). Let's not forget Keir Fraser either! Keir is the developer behind the Gotek floppy disk emulator firmware *FlashFloppy*, and to me and many others in our community he is a legend, helping to keep Amiga software preserved and useable in the modern era. I think nearly every Amiga owner either has a Gotek drive running *FlashFloppy* installed in their computer or has seen one used. Keir takes a break from firmware development on page 50, giving us the low-down on the games he likes to boot up from his own Gotek in *Six Of The Best*.

Right, before I head off to watch another episode of *Babylon 5*, I'll remind you not to miss our brand new AMOS coding section by Keith Elcombe towards the back of the magazine on page 54. It's really never too late to learn how to program, and this series is a great introduction to using *AMOS Professional* and its many features. Give it a go, who knows, one day we may be writing about your new software or game in *Amiga Addict*! Farewell for now.

- Jonah Naylor (Editor)



Jonah
(loves 3D, lacks patience)
jonah@addict.media

Have you created 3D or other art on Amiga?
"I've dabbled with 3D, the Amiga is amazing at it, but my lack of patience waiting for renders usually results in me resorting back to 2D."

Stock or accelerated Amiga?
"As you can guess from my above answer, I tend to use stock Amigas. I do have a couple of Next Gen Amigas for OS4.1 and MorphOS though if they count as accelerated, they're PPC-based."

Is TV or monitor the authentic Amiga experience?
"Both options are authentic, the Amiga is versatile! But I prefer a CRT monitor on a desk."



Ian
(never knock stock)
ian@addict.media

Have you created 3D or other art on Amiga?
"I remember spending time with Real 3D from a coverdisk. I never managed the iconic teacup - just a badly lit sphere! DPaint is more my wheelhouse."

Stock or accelerated Amiga?
"I'm definitely more keen on a stock machine with a couple of enhancements for quality of life. There's not much I would do with acceleration that I wouldn't just do with emulation instead."

Is TV or monitor the authentic Amiga experience?
"While I use a monitor for the Amiga these days, I grew up with a 14" portable TV in my bedroom."



Ravi
(040's enough)
ravi@addict.media

Have you created 3D or other art on Amiga?
"Other than example files, I have not. I used to love seeing some of the readers' renders in old Amiga magazines though."

Stock or accelerated Amiga?
"On my A4000 the 040 is enough for me, but I like a bit of extra kick in the wedge machines."

Is TV or monitor the authentic Amiga experience?
"A nice CRT monitor is my preferred choice, but nothing gets me more nostalgic than sitting on the couch to play a game of Micro Machines on a huge CRT TV screen."



James
(puts extra in his trapdoor)
james@addict.media

Have you created 3D or other art on Amiga?
"I used to spend hours and hours creating (very bad) animations in DPaint III, it's such a fun and simple program to use."

Stock or accelerated Amiga?
"I always had stock when I was younger, but now I have an 030 in my A1200. At the bare minimum extra RAM is needed for WHDLoad."

Is TV or monitor the authentic Amiga experience?
"As long as it's a CRT you can't really go too wrong but an original Commodore or Philips monitor is ideal (if you can find one of course!)"



Paul
(skint but owns a TV)
paul@addict.media

Have you created 3D or other art on Amiga?
"No Amiga programs can cope with my artistic talents of drawing stickmen!"

Stock or accelerated Amiga?
"A stock Amiga, that's what I have fond childhood memories of. However, since working on Amiga Addict I've seen some really impressive upgrades."

Is TV or monitor the authentic Amiga experience?
"A television for me, there's no way I can afford a monitor as well. (Ed. - "I know... AA doesn't pay well, cue the violins! What do we expect if we're going to sit around playing games all day?")"



Josh
(tellies can't be too big)
josh@addict.media

Have you created 3D or other art on Amiga?
"To be honest it's work to me! I love it, and I use the Amiga a lot in creating Amiga Addict. But it's nice at the end of a long day when I can relax and just play Lemmings."

Stock or accelerated Amiga?
"Accelerated. There's no shame in upgrading and speeding things up if you can afford to do so."

Is TV or monitor the authentic Amiga experience?
"I prefer a monitor for design/artwork. The TV is great for playing on my TheA500 Mini. Similar to Ravi's answer, SWOS is amazing on a big telly."

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ISSUE 23 - 2023

REGULARS

Editorial & Meet The Addicts.....	3
Amiga News.....	11
User Group Therapy.....	12
Coverdisk Capers: Hoi AGA Remix & Classic Coverdisk Of The Month.....	15
Amiga Addict Merch.....	17
Subscribe & Back Issues.....	25
Demoscene.....	52
Stoo's Views.....	57
Next Issue.....	58

AMIGA FOCUS

Kickstart 01.....	7
This Is Nutz!?!.....	16
Amiga Discovery.....	18
Lost Worlds.....	19
The Amigos Interview (Part 1).....	26

AMIGA INSIGHT

The Wonder Down Under.....	22
LightWave 3D.....	32

ONSCREEN

Gold Standard: The Blues Brothers.....	40
Roguecraft Preview.....	42
Alien Breed II: The Horror Continues.....	46
CD32 Corner: Gunship 2000.....	48
Six Of The Best With Keir Fraser.....	50

TESTBENCH

Coding In AMOS.....	54
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COVER STORIES THIS MONTH...



LIGHTWAVE

The Amiga played its part in making *The X-Files*, *Young Indiana Jones*, *Babylon 5*, *Goof Troop*, *Star Trek Deep Space Nine*, *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*, *GoldenEye*, *Max Headroom*, *Jurassic Park*, *seaQuest DSV* and *The Terminator*! Need we list more?

PAGE 32



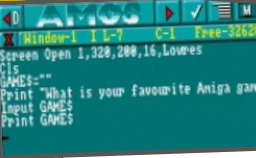
PAGE 42

Badger Punch Games are currently working on *Roguecraft*, which is sure to be a hit for the Amiga. We invite the developers behind the game to AA Towers, hoping to wine and dine them into revealing all their secrets about the upcoming release!



PAGE 22

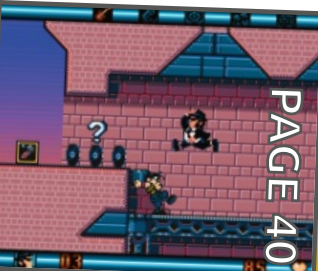
CLASSIC MAGAZINE TALK DOWN UNDER
AA speak to Amiga mag veteran, Tristan Mason.



PAGE 54

BECOME AN AMOS PRO!
We teach you how to start coding, using the Amiga's easiest and most popular language.

There's loads of classic gaming this month, including *Alien Breed II*, *The Blues Brothers* and *Gunship 2000*!



PAGE 40

ONSCREEN

*Amigas were used, but not harmed, in the creation of this magazine.

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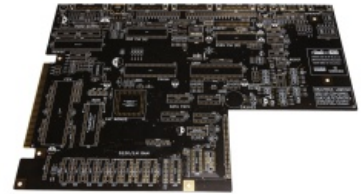
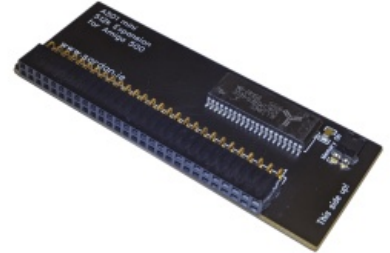
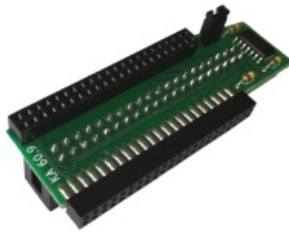
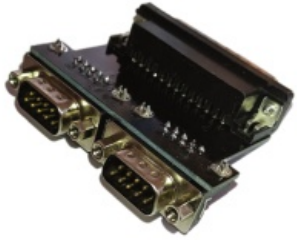
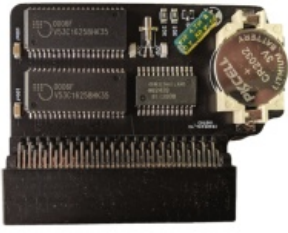
• Editor Jonah Naylor • Deputy Editor Ian Griffiths • Art Director Joshua Kelly
• Games Editor & Art Assistant James Walker • Community Editor & Roving Reporter Ravi Abbott
• Features Editor & Staff Writer Paul Monaghan • Advertising Manager & Staff Writer Hannah Naylor

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Kickstart 01

- Ian reports back from the first national UK Amiga event in years

Over the past couple of years working on AA, I've been to more events that I would have thought possible. User group meets, games fairs, multi-platform events, even the odd Amiga-focussed event abroad. It's great to meet and chat with readers, and more importantly, it gets me out of the bubble of magazine production that it's all too easy to get stuck within.

But surprisingly, given the popularity of the system in the UK, I've never been to a dedicated Amiga event here.

And that's because there hasn't been a national Amiga event for nearly 20 years - the last events of note were the "Big Bash" events held in Peterborough in the early 2000s. It's been far too long since the UK's Amiga users have had the chance to get together, and it was time for this to change. Thankfully Community Editor Ravi Abbott had both the will and the experience to put together something a little special! So how did it go?

The event

Kickstart ran over two days at the start of July in the English city of Nottingham. The venue was the historic Meadow Lane football ground, home of Notts County FC. Honestly, with them being a lower



Core and Bullfrog were huge on Amiga, so it was good to hear from Simon Phipps (above) and Alex Trowers (below).



Ravi put this whole thing together.



An modern Amiga developers panel hosts Hoffman, nivrīg and Zendar from Badger Punch.

league club for some time, I wasn't sure what to expect, but it was a really nice ground with good facilities and super friendly staff, just a great experience. Around 600 people packed out the venue over the two days, so it felt like the party was pumping the whole time.

The feel the event was going for was part tradeshow and part user group meet (with a room for each), throwing in a sprinkling of talks for good measure. The reason this could happen at all is down to the community keeping things going over the years, so this event sought to recognise that.

Trading talk

As the *Amiga Addict* stand was in full effect as always, the team spent most of their time in the "traders and talks" room, selling mags and chatting to readers. Which wasn't exactly bad to be honest! We were in good company too - AmigaKit had their usual large range of hardware, as did Retro EZ, and Bitmap Books were selling the finest literary wares. Stephen Fletcher had a stall selling all his awesome Amiga documentaries such as *The Commodore Story* and *Amiga Alive and Kicking*.



Mike Dailly had plenty of interesting Lemmings-related tales.



Jon Hare of course had thrilling stories to share about his time at Sensible.

As a stalwart of retro shows, Stephen Jones was in attendance, showing off all the various Checkmate cases and demoing his new retro monitors. And it was also nice to see James Bradley selling the latest version of his Amiga-created board game, *Civitas Nihilum* (which we covered way back in Issue 4).

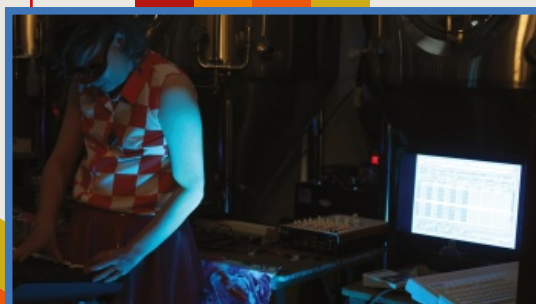
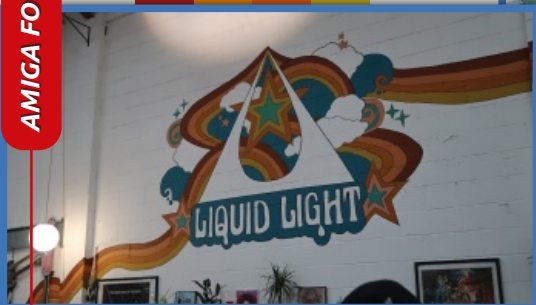
And while all this selling was going on, the talks arena was buzzing with some of the finest folks from Amiga history all probed with interesting questions by both Ravi and Paul Drury of *Retro Gamer*. I even saw Mike Clarke, musical maestro from Psygnosis, wandering around - and he wasn't even a special guest! ▶



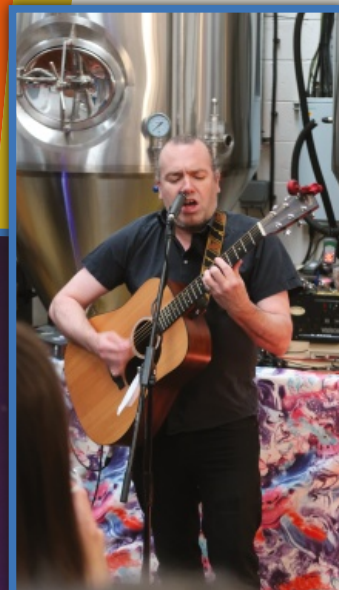
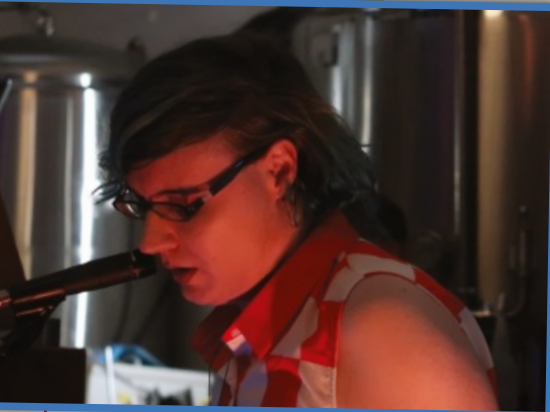
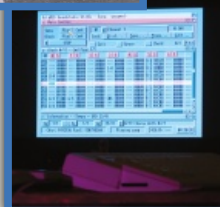
The talks space attracted a decent crowd.

RECAP PARTY

AMIGA FOCUS



With such rabid creativity in the Amiga community, it would have been criminal not to have a big old party midway through the event. Saturday night was the designated time. And it didn't disappoint! With an opening set from Ravi himself, the unbeatable hOffman headlining, an absolutely banging set (using Amigas as soft synths) from Paulee Alex Bow, an unusual Game Boy set to break things up from HarleyLikesMusic and even Jon Hare whipping his acoustic guitar out for the night. All in and around a local brewery called Liquid Light. Take a look at the pictures if you don't believe me!





Nivrig playing his game, *Rogue Declan Zero*, on dual Immortal joysticks. Very cool!



Neil from RMC had with him a partially functional prototype PCB from the failed arcade *Lemmings* cabinet.

Cool things to see and do

Honestly, there were many, many things to draw your attention at Kickstart in its inaugural year, outside of the planned events even. The whole second room was dedicated to the user groups, and they brought a whole range of interesting gear with them.

Akiko32 Portable

One of the most interesting pieces of original hardware was Michael Spindley's Akiko Portable. You may know Michael from his work creating a new ITX small form factor Amiga motherboard based on the CD32 (the Akiko32). For Kickstart, he'd gone a step further and built that into a laptop format - and it's really neat! This is an Amiga laptop you could practically use - 030 processor, a bunch of Fast RAM and all the bells and whistles. Keep track on akiko.computer.



© RMC - The Cave



© RMC - The Cave



The user group room was bustling for the whole weekend.

Pretty much every piece of original hardware was on display, with everything from some fancy customised A500/1200s through to several big box Amigas, and all the Minis, MiSTers and emulation boxes you could imagine in between. The atmosphere was great, with all the user groups mingling with each other throughout the whole weekend, and I got to see a few friends from across the country, which is always nice.

The great thing about the user group setup was the variety of things going on - some machines were running new games like *Roguescraft* and *Rogue Declan Zero*; some were there to show off cool hardware, like Mike Nicholson's transparent Yorkshire Amiga Group system and the bright and flashy LEDs on Rob Cranley's Solas board demo system. There were some demos running of course, and some people were playing classic games - there was at least one null modem linked *Lotus II* setup, and I even got a tutorial in *Populous*! Pretty much everything you'd want from the user groups.

And there's more! As always, it was good



A lovely A4000 030 with the classic benchmark - *Frontier Elite*.

Backup that floppy!

Rob Smith (of Drawbridge and retro.directory fame) had a cool service to offer - a full disk backup service. I have to admit, I was expecting a couple of Amigas set up or a PC laptop with a Drawbridge and nothing more, but he had an impressive custom device with three floppy drives, three USB ports, an LCD screen and a few arcade buttons. Pop your ancient disk in, plug in a USB key, press a few buttons and it'll spit out an ADF or SCP file after a very familiar X-Copy animation! Great idea - I hope some people got access to disks they hadn't seen for years.



to see Neil from RMC promoting The Cave and also I got to have a chat with Alex Crowley for the first time, who runs the Arcade Archive on the same site. Andrew McCloud was promoting his now-successful Immortal joysticks Kickstarter, and Szymon GK was there with his custom-built big box cases we've featured in the mag in the past. Digital Retro Bay was also there with his cool new floppy/Gotek switches, but a little more on that next issue. 🌟

I wish I had the space to show you more from Kickstart, but it was a real success - the whole atmosphere was a relaxed and friendly one, and everyone was there to have a good time. There was a distinct lack of drama at the event, which was good to see. It seems like a followup next year is guaranteed, and I can't wait to book my place!

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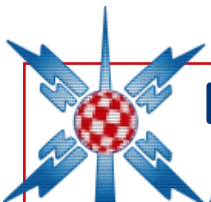
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AMIGA NEWS

A Five Zero Zero

WinUAE has been in active development for over 25 years, but despite countless releases, it has never quite managed to achieve perfect 68000-based emulation. That is until now with their 5.0.0 release! We'd like to congratulate the WinUAE dev team on now supporting fully cycle-accurate A500 emulation. This is a historic version, with Amiga emulation finally matching the real hardware experience. Download at: www.winuae.net



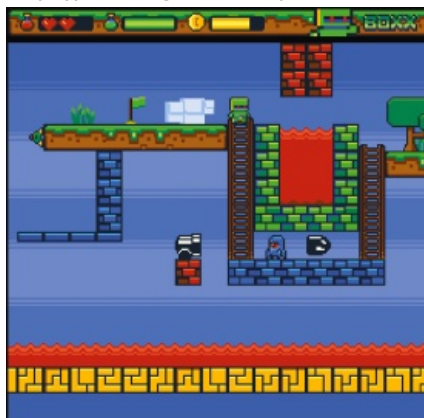
Apollo Bites Back

The V4 Ultimate Expansion Board is an impressive bit of kit aimed at owners of the Vampire V4/V4+ Standalone. There are too many features to list here, but some useful enhancements it adds to the Vampire are a serial port, MIDI in/out, ITX front panel button/LED support, legacy 9-pin joystick/mouse ports and CompactFlash back panel access. Although some may consider Apollo products to be expensive, the combination of the V4 Ultimate Expansion Board, an ITX case and a Vampire V4 is still better value than many secondhand Commodore big box Amigas and also cheaper than an X5000. If you're wanting a modern Amiga or prefer having brand new components for reliability, this upgrade now makes the Vampire viable for power users. Find details at: www.shop.apollo-computer.com



A Stronger Boxx

The Boxx series of games is a fantastic set of fun-packed platformers, but as we previously mentioned in our review of Boxx 4 in Issue 21, the first three games do struggle to run on hardware specs lower than A1200 due to them being made using the *Backbone Game Creator*. The good news is that the first Boxx title has now been re-developed using the *Scorpion Engine*, with new code based on Boxx 4 and updated graphics and sound. We're happy to report that BoxxRemake even plays well on a stock 1MB A500 and can be downloaded free of charge at: <https://lemming880.itch.io/boxxremake>



Decrunch Success

Bulbmaster is a Sokoban-style game being developed by Drakon, Steiger and Stoopi. It started life as a competition winner at the 2023 Decrunch demoparty in Wrocław, Poland. Fans of puzzlers such as Boulderdash and Dyna Blaster should enjoy this one. Download a WIP demo at: <https://neofuturism.itch.io/bulbmaster>



New Look, Same Amiga Goodness

The Hall Of Light games database website has undergone a revamp. HOL is part of abime.net, an Amiga network of sites who host many well-known resources for the community such as English Amiga Board and Amiga Magazine Rack. The new HOL website layout makes it easier than ever

to find details about almost any Amiga game release. Each game listing contains screenshots, credits, box art, manuals, cheats and review scores. Check out HOL's overhaul at: <https://amiga.abime.net>

An Enjoyable Nightshift..?

AA reader Venturas informed us recently of a stunning looking adventure game entitled *Night/Shift*. Dubbed a "Cypherpunk Adventure", this release comes from the indie studio Eclectic Imaginations, who have generously released the game as a free download on their website. Set in Boston, USA, the story is based around three young citizens who uncover the greatest conspiracy of their time. How intriguing! The impressive dystopian graphics are achieved by using hi-res HAM8 scenes, and the gameplay boasts over 70 visitable locations. System requirements are AGA or SAGA chipset with 2MB Chip RAM and 23MB of free hard disk space for installation. Grab a copy of the game here: www.nightshift.cx



TheA600 Teeny

Kickstart UK was a real success this year (see show report, page 7), but one thing we didn't expect to see unveiled at the event was a brand new Amiga mini! Produced by Amiga Kit, the A600GS runs AmiSphere (Amiga Kit and A-EON's own app store), which will allow software and games to be downloaded to the device via the internet. Two models of the console will be available with different specs. Find details at: <http://wiki.amiga.org/>



More Power To Amiga

Mad Hackers Lab have tweeted (*Ed. - "Or is that Xed?!"*) a render and short video clip their new Amiga power supply, the PowerShark. Using a 12v USB-C input, this compact power adaptor saves Amiga users from having to carry around the usual bricks everywhere with us! See full specs at: www.retrousbpower.com





One of the most essential aspects of the Amiga community is its user groups. They bring together people for fun and to exchange knowledge, skills and hardware. Despite the internet making it a less lonely hobby, there's nothing better than sitting down and chatting with fellow Amigans in person!

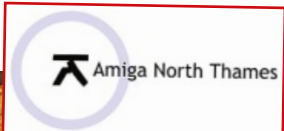
Amiga North Thames (ANT)

Next meet date: 10th September 2023, 13:00 - 17:00

Location: St. Mary Magdalene Vestry, Windmill Hill, Enfield, Middlesex EN2 7AJ

Website: www.amiganorththames.co.uk/

Group: www.facebook.com/groups/AmigaNorthThames



Norwich Amiga Group (NAG)

Next meet date: None currently announced

Location: Bowling House, 7

Dereham Road, Norwich, NR2 4HX

Group: [www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/NorwichAmigaGroup)

NorwichAmigaGroup

Twitter: [twitter.com/](https://twitter.com/NorwichAmigaGrp)

NorwichAmigaGrp



Scottish Amiga Users Group (SAUG)

Next meet date: None announced

Location: Shawlands Church, 111

Moss-Side Rd, Shawlands, Glasgow

G41 3TP

Group: [www.facebook.com/groups/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/626138110921245)

626138110921245

Website: www.saug.co.uk



South West Amiga Group (SWAG)

Next meet date: 23rd September 2023, 10:00 - 22:00

Location: Dodington Parish Hall, Finch

Rd, Chipping Sodbury, Bristol BS37 6JZ

Website: www.southwestamiga.org.uk

E-mail: swag@southwestamiga.org.uk



Robin Hood Amiga Group (RHAG)

Next meet date: None currently announced

Location: Haywood Road

Community Centre, 46

Haywood Rd, Mapperley,

Nottingham NG3 6BA

Website: rhamiga.com

Group: [www.facebook.com/groups/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/2642483889340698/)

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Lincs Amiga Group (LAG)

Next meet date: 7th October 2023, 11:00 - 17:00

Location: Welton Village Hall,

Welton, Lincoln LN2 3NR

Group: [www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/929767783738360)

groups/929767783738360

Website: lincsamiga.org.uk

E-mail: info@lincsamiga.org.uk



Stamford & Peterborough Amiga Group (SPAG)

Next meet date: None currently announced

Location: The Fleet (Italian Community

Centre), Fleet Way, Peterborough PE2 8DL

Website: www.spagamiga.co.uk

E-mail: hello@spagamiga.co.uk

Group: www.facebook.com/groups/spaguk



North West Amiga Group (NWAG)

Next meet date: None currently announced

Location: Haywood

Road Community

Centre, 46 Haywood

Rd, Mapperley,

Nottingham NG3 6BA

Website: rhamiga.com

Group: [www.facebook.com/groups/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/2642483889340698/)

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THEY'RE BACK!

Kickstart Amiga Group

Next meet date: Sunday 15th

October 2023, 9:00 - 21:00

Location: Ottershaw Village Hall,

Brox Road, Ottershaw, KT16 0HG

Website:

www.kickstartamigroup.org.uk

E-mail:

hello@kickstartamigroup.org.uk

Group: [www.facebook.com/groups/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/kickstartamiga)

kickstartamiga



Yorkshire Amiga Group (YAG)

Next meet date: 19th August 2023,

10:00 - 16:00 (in partnership with NWAG)

Location: Rochdale Masonic Hall, 2

Richard St, Rochdale OL11 1DU

Website: yorkshireamiga.co.uk

Group: [www.facebook.com/groups/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/617511626777966)

617511626777966



EVENTS COMING UP

Amiga 38 Germany

Date: 7th October 2023

Website:

www.amigaevent.de/ticket/

Play Expo Blackpool

Date: 7th - 8th October 2023

Website:

www.playexpoblackpool.com

If we've missed your group and you'd like to see it mentioned here, please get in touch at amiga@addict.media. We'd love to promote your event!



TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE FROM
WWW.AMIGAEVENT.DE/TICKET

AMIGA GERMANY

38



AMIGADS DEVELOPMENT IN 2023
30 YEARS OF THE AMIGA CD32: A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES
DEMOSCENE: UNESCO DIGITAL CULTURE HERITAGE
RESHOOT PROXIMA 3 RELEASE PARTY
LIVE MUSIC ACTS
APOLLO DEMO CONTEST
PRE-OPENING AND GET-TOGETHER (FRIDAY)
AFTERSHOW PARTY (SATURDAY EVENING)
FREE DIGITAL AMIGA / C64 FOREVER LICENCE CODE FOR EVERY VISITOR
HUGE RAFFLE

7TH OCTOBER
2023

AMIGA38
GERMANY
30th OCTOBER 2023

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18B, 41189 MÖNCHENGLADBACH.



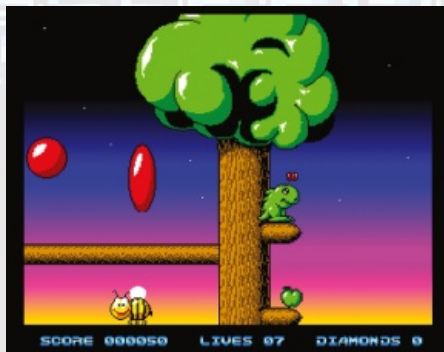
BITMAP
BOOKS

PC ENGINE: THE BOX ART COLLECTION

www.pcenginebook.com



COVERDISK EMPERS



REGULARS

System requirements: Single player only, using joystick/gamepad.
Compatible with all AGA Amiga models and TheA500 Mini.
Coverdisk produced by Mark Broughton from www.amigaboing.net

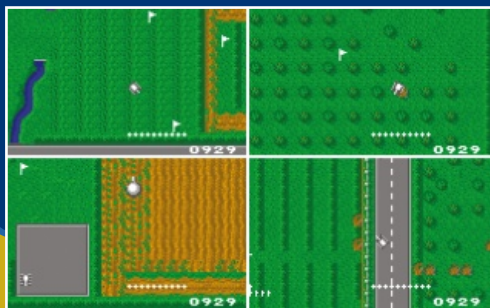
Superfrog, James Pond and Zool had better watch out. A dinosaur named Hoi is on our coverdisk and he's on a quest to find his true love; that's if he can make it past the first level!

Hoi received mixed reviews on release in 1992, with the launch retail price at £25.99 *Amiga Power's* Gary Penn described the game as "a laugh, but I'm not paying you that much for a Good Time, vicar." Well fear not, AA does not have such a hefty price tag! Not only is the full version of *Hoi* free with this magazine, but it's also the AGA remix edition created by developers Team Hoi. Choose from five extremely colourful and varied levels which should challenge even the most seasoned platform fans.

As a bonus, *5K Invaders!* is on the disk too. (Yup... it's only 5K!)

ISSUE 23 COVERDISK DOWNLOAD

Use the link or QR code below to download our coverdisk, we've even included a free floppy label for subscribers. amiga.addict.media/coverdisk23



Classic Coverdisk Of The Month

The One Amiga, Issue 68 (May 1994)

This issue, Ian wants to share just one disk from an amazing three disk edition of *The One...*

Yes, you heard right. A whole three coverdisks. And this was an impressive selection - I could sit here waxing lyrical about Disks B and C too (cough... *Banshee* anyone?), but we only have half a page here. So let's dig into that awesome first disk.

You can't really say fairer than four different games on one disk can you? And sure, you'll need 1MB Chip RAM for most of them, but this is 1994 - everyone has 1MB Chip! This one could have stood on its own, with two demos and two PD games to keep you entertained, especially when headlining the disk is a massive demo of *Sonic*-fancier *Mr. Nutz*. Bright and colourful and a bunch of fun, it's definitely a good way to spend an afternoon.

Coming up in second place for the more

cerebral amongst you is a demo of the oft-overlooked puzzle game *Clockwiser*. Visually pleasing with a novel mechanic about rotating blocks until they match the desired end result on the right. Sounds easy? Maybe not...

Our first PD title is *Tanx n Stuff*, a really great little deathmatch game where up to four players can battle it out in their tiny tanks (or stuff... boats) in a capture the flag(s) style multiplayer game. Of course, you can fight against AI, but that's not quite the same, is it?

Your last game - and really just the filler of the disk - is *Whac-A-Mole* simulator, *Ouch!* Grab your mouse and click on the... (um, are they eggs?)... as they pop up. It's actually even more simplistic than it sounds. But fun for five minutes as a score attack challenge.

Altogether a fine disk. And there's two more for the cover price!



THIS IS NUTZ!?

Welcome to the column which aims to shine a light on the forgotten, delving into the darkest corners of Amiga's most controversial and overlooked past.



LEFT: A joystick can be plugged into the Joyboard's own game port for Space Invader-style games. MIDDLE: The rear of the box shows three other compatible releases.



Amiga's advertising back in 1983 had already forged a strong brand identity, with all of their controller peripherals and game carts grouped together as part of The Power System. An ingenious marketing move making the products a collectable set. Any gamer worth their salt would want to own them all in order to become a power player, with advertisements promising "higher scores". The Power System umbrella also ensured consumers could easily recognise which games and hardware worked correctly together.



This month, we examine an early product which is part of the Amiga's intrinsic bond to Atari Corporation. For some reason Commodore never really made a song or dance about it...

For all the jibes that Amiga magazines have had at Atari over the years (*Ed. - "Including AA, we can't resist!"*), it's ironic to think that the original Amiga computer has more DNA in its blood from Atari than it does from Commodore. Even the Amiga's original designers were ex-Atari hardware engineers, and the Amiga itself came very close to being an Atari branded machine. (*Ian - "See our Joe Decuir interview in Issue 9 for more on this shocker!"*)

Yet, long before Commodore acquired the company, Amiga was doing what it did best; innovating. Prior to the release of the A1000, Amiga had already made a name for itself by producing add-ons, game cartridges and joysticks for the Sears Video Arcade, Coleco hardware and Atari 2600 console systems.

Most notable of the many early Amiga products, was a peripheral called The Joyboard, which Amiga brought to market in 1982. Forget the Wii Balance Board craze of the naughties, Amiga had already created this technology a staggering 25 years before Nintendo's so-called "revolutionary" motion device came to exist.

Equally remarkable as The Joyboard itself is Amiga's bundled pack-in game *Mogul Maniac* which was included in every Joyboard retail box. This skiing simulation was the first of four Joyboard-compatible titles published by Amiga for the Atari 2600 - the others being *Off Your Rocker*, *S.A.C. Alert* and *Surf's Up*. The complete set of these games was later included on the *Power Play Arcade* cartridge collection. *Mogul Maniac* required the player to mount The Joyboard and use the power of the body to steer; tilting forward to accelerate or leaning back to slow down. Navigating a skier in a computer game had never been so intuitive or realistic before, and arguably, hasn't been since!

The Amiga company's early slogan, "dedicated to the science of fun," only goes to show how the team at Amiga continually pushed the envelope, even before creating the computers that we dearly love to this day. Time to dust off that old 2600...? 🎮



It's unusual to think of Amiga as a games publisher, however in 1983 they put out a flurry of releases. Games were published through partnering with developers such as Jerry Lawson of Video Soft, with a number of titles offered in order to support Amiga peripherals from their own The Power System range. Titles included *Scavenger Hunt*, *Depth Charge*, *Ghost Attack*, and *Havoc* to name but a few!

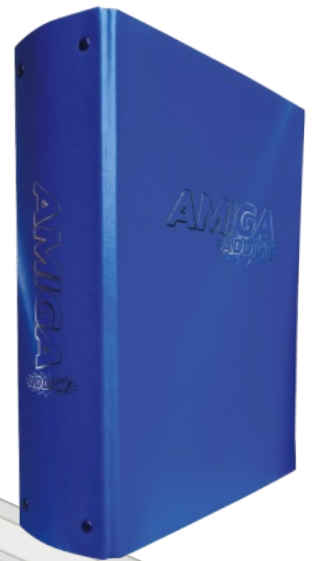


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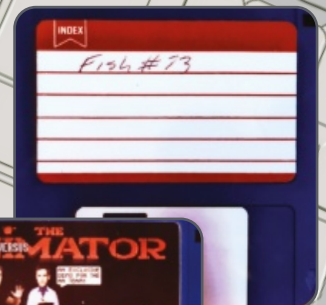


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Amiga Discovery

Each issue, roving reporter Ravi goes on a voyage of discovery, to find brave new civilisations (of Amiga users) who seek out new life for our hardware.

When we look at the recent developments in Amiga hardware, lighting seems to be an area that's quickly growing. With the increased customization of machines, some great devices are popping up which allow you to make your machine stand out from the rest.

Many people are now putting simple LED solutions inside their Amigas, often at a very cheap price due to the availability of the technology, and cases like the a1200.net transparent models and some amazing custom plexiglass efforts have really helped make these lighting setups stand out. Some of the next generation of towered machines are also getting the treatment. With good placement, even a standard Amiga wedge case can look impressive with lighting through the vents of the original case.

LED+

If you're looking at expanding the function of your case LEDs, then you cannot go wrong with Rob Cranley's new LED lighting system, Solas (Irish for light). This device clips onto the A1200 clockport and has some great options: fully programmable colours and patterns, temperature sensors, even a fan speed controller. And to top it off, the lights can react to the Amiga's sound output by directly tapping into mono output, making your Amiga dance.

This project has grown over time, and I cannot wait until it gets a full release.

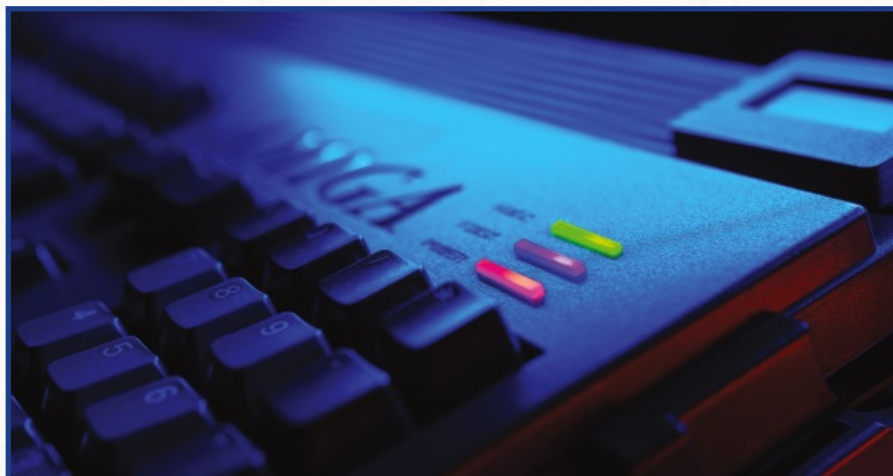
1989 Amiga 2000
Sweet Light DMX
board.



1995 Sweet Light
parallel port to
DMX512 interface.



Rob's custom Solas translucent Amiga in all its glory.



The Bifrost Project, jazzing up the Amiga's LEDs.

The software really makes it stand out, and I am sure more features and ideas will be added over time as it expands.

Frosty

Another device that takes a very simple element of Amiga lighting and makes it shine is the Bifrost Project. It reimagines the Amiga activity LEDs and expands on them, adding some very well-thought-out features. With a simple - yet genius - design, you can customise the lights to be any colour or even a range of colours per light, or really behave however you want. Each light acts as a button, and this means you can simply click them on the fly to reconfigure and change the colours. The Bifrost is fantastic and available for all the wedge Amiga models at a very reasonable price.

Not only do we have recent projects that really stand out, but the Amiga has a very strong legacy in the world of lighting.

Run DMX

MIDI is often mentioned as a sticking point for the Amiga, and frequently

used in arguments about Amiga vs. Atari. But the Amiga has many external MIDI interface options, and the CDTV had built-in MIDI ports from the start.

While MIDI, which you have probably heard of, is a protocol for instruments and making music, DMX is a protocol for professional stage lighting systems, a standard used on huge lighting desks in the industry. Often MIDI systems can work with DMX - it is a basic but very powerful system that can be used to control not only lighting sequences, but also special effects, such as pyrotechnics and smoke machines.

In 1987, Daslight created the world's first computerised lighting controller. It was for the Amiga 2000 and allowed your Amiga to become a lighting desk



Imagine running this setup with your Amiga!

with the assistance of a Zorro card and some software to fire out DMX signals.

Another company creating such devices was Phoenix Micro Technologies, who created another Zorro 2 card. This worked with the *Aladdin Light Control* software, enabling features like cue mixers, chases (the ability to group lights together and sequence), manual and automatic crossfading, and automatic hard drive backup. This would be essential for running a show or performance, as you would pre-prepare the cue list, save it, and then fire it up.

DMX512 was a new protocol that arrived later and allowed devices like digital screens to be controlled, providing further functionality. It was supported on the Amiga in 1994 with a device by Sweet Light (a company still in the industry today) and attached to the parallel port. RJ Mical once mentioned going to a Peter Gabriel show and being amazed to see it was all being run off an Amiga! It's very possible it was using this setup or similar.

Future light?

Having seen new MIDI interfaces start to arrive on the Amiga, it would be amazing to see a DMX interface, or even just a custom piece of software that worked with cue lists and chases and fired out MIDI signals. Hooking up a MIDI to DMX converter to the MIDI interface would be relatively easy and cheap. Seeing a whole lighting rig or stage show run on Amiga in 2023 would certainly be an impressive feat!

If there is anybody reading this with knowledge, history, or ideas around Amiga and lighting, please let us know! We'd be fascinated to get more details. 🌟



LOST WORLDS

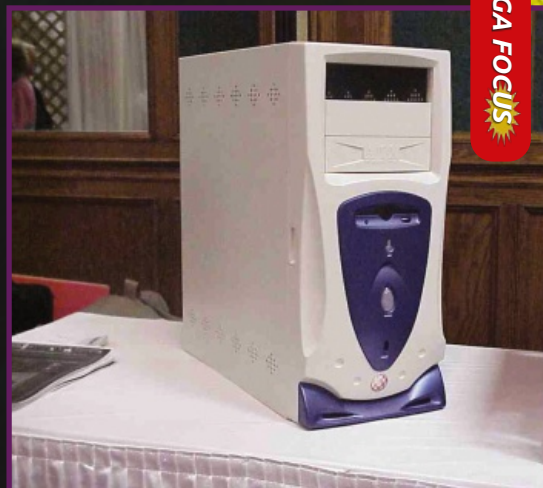
- Ravi digs into the past to look at the Amiga innovations that never quite made it to the users.

In the previous two issues, we have discussed the history of the BoXeR and the BoXeR 2, along with the people behind it. We explored the initial plan and how it evolved over time, considering the financial situation and the state of the Amiga scene at that time. Now, let's take a look at what was actually produced and displayed publicly.

The look of the BoXeR

When creating an Amiga for the next generation, it was crucial to ensure it was eye-catching. Desktop cases were becoming outdated, and tower cases were starting to evolve beyond simple beige boxes. The proposed cases for the BoXeR were most likely repurposed PC cases, with the standard ATX board able to fit into any tower at the time. I can imagine a backplate was the only change required.

internal space and, interestingly, featured a Boing Ball on the front. This led to speculation about a possible collaboration with Amiga, as mentioned in the previous articles.



AMIGA FOCUS



Early concepts of the BoXeR had a distinct iMac look to them.

The sleek tower look continued to evolve.

A year later, Anti Gravity displayed at the St. Louis Amiga Show in 2000. They showcased the motherboard housed in a transparent plastic box and also unveiled a whole new set of cases. With these cases, they fully embraced the iMac look, drawing inspiration from its design. As there were no further case designs revealed, we can only assume that this would have been the final look they would have gone with for the BoXeR. ▶

In 1998, the Jony Ive-designed iMac was released, featuring a translucent "Bondi Blue" plastic look. Later, a full range of colours became available, injecting the computer market with vibrancy and excitement. Anti Gravity also aimed to adopt this look, but this time in a tower form. The first case bore a striking resemblance to the Bondi Blue plastic design, mixed with a classic Amiga "Power Tower" (a custom E/Box tower for the A1200 that was popular at the time).

As the project continued to evolve and transformed into the BoXeR 2, a brand new case and motherboard were displayed at the St. Louis Amiga Show in 1999. The case was shown with the motherboard inside, but it was not demonstrated as running. This case appeared to have more





Was this the final look of the BoXeR?

Was it too early for FPGA?

Plenty of images and information about the prototype boards were available; however, every time they were shown in public - they were non-functional. The layout and design had many elements recognisable in today's Amiga scene.

While the BoXeR 2 retained the concepts and ideas of the original, it offered upgrades such as a slot for PPC expansion, PCI slots, and most importantly, an FPGA-based implementation of the Amiga custom chipset. Since the Anti Gravity couldn't obtain the original chipsets, they attempted to implement it themselves.

Looking back now in 2023, we realise how challenging this task would have been to achieve. Until the arrival of the Minimig, the Amiga chipset on FPGA was an uncertain proposition, and many doubted its feasibility. Even at that time, Jeri Ellsworth hadn't even publicly showcased her C64 DTV yet (the entire C64 on a chip). Implementing the entire chipset was a monumental task, not to mention the PCI drivers, PPC implementation and many other ambitious ideas this design would require.

Out for the count?

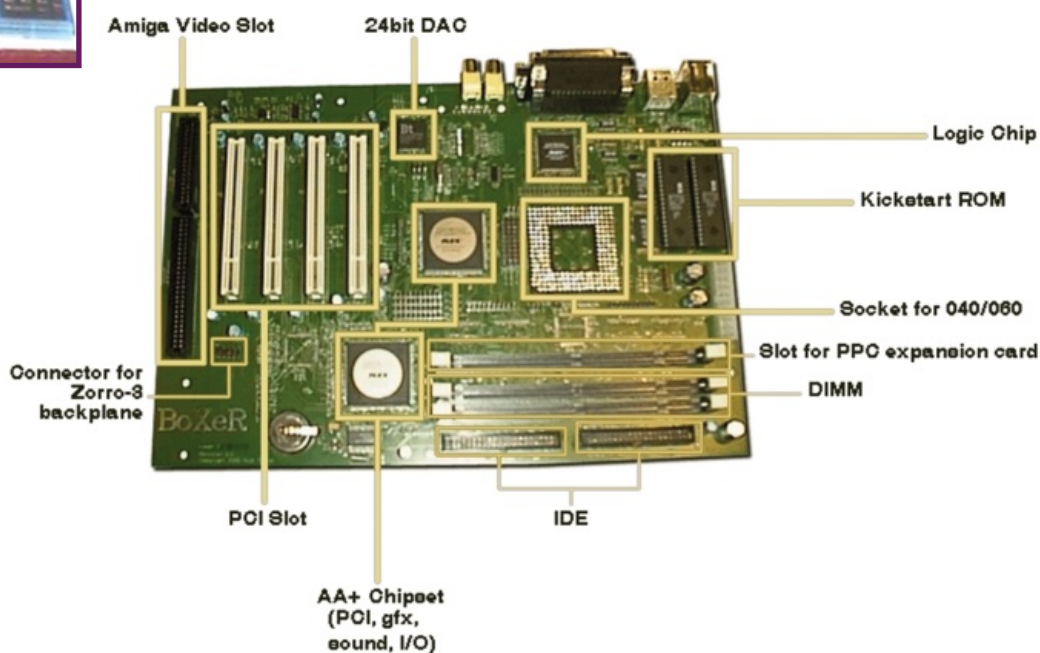
Mike had already demonstrated some impressive feats before, but I believe the time pressures, the urgency to progress the Amiga scene, and dwindling investment led him to hang up his hat on the BoXeR project.

Even today, I consider the BoXeR a great concept and design - it just didn't get its time to shine. I believe it would be easier to achieve today with the developments we've seen in the Amiga world over the years. However, with PPC becoming retro and the classic scene thriving, I'm not sure if we will ever witness a similar concept again.

The legacy of the BoXeR is fascinating; it came so close to coming to fruition that people even paid for pre-orders (which I believe have been resolved with refunds, but I'm unsure of the current

situation). Its legacy reflects a period of Amiga where people kept the dream alive and strived for the future, before embracing it as the fun niche hobby it is today. The BoXeR gave us hope. 🌟

Images courtesy of <https://coxd.tripod.com/pictures.htm> (and originally Czech Amiga News/David Steidley and Fabio Benedetti) and The Big Book of Amiga Hardware. For further information please check out www.bambi-amiga.co.uk/amigahistory/boxer.html



A labelled version of the 2000 prototype.



The BoXeR prototype board as displayed in 2000.

CUSTOM BUILT AMIGA'S & C64'S



The Wonder Down Under

- Paul discovers the Australian Commodore magazine scene

Over these last 22 issues, I've had the pleasure to interview fantastic people from all over the UK magazine scene. And as a magazine we've even covered some US publications like *Amiga World*. But I think very few of us know all that much about mags from elsewhere.

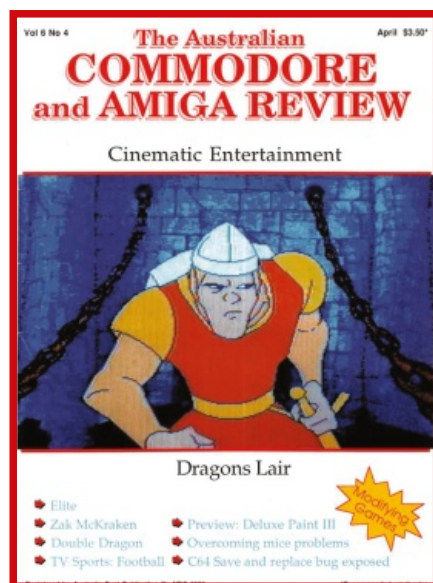
Did you know there were Australian native Amiga publications? It's very easy to get trapped in our UK bubble and forget about what things looked like for our cousins around the world. That's why I was so happy to encounter **Tristan Mason**, one of the staffers at *Australian Commodore and Amiga Review*.

Thanks for joining us this issue Tristan. We love getting insight into what the Amiga scene was like around the world back in the day.

G'day and thanks for inviting me to your magazine. It's a testament to the Amiga scene that there is still a loyal following and interest in it after all these years.

What are some of your earliest memories in computing or arcades?

I had what would be considered a rather misspent youth, and spent quite a lot of my time in arcades - which in the late 70s and early 80s were booming. We had a local group of shops in the suburb I grew up in which included an empty, kind of scruffy, old unused shop. One day it was opened and had around five pinball machines in it (the kind with plastic rotary dials for scores that made a hell of a clacking racket) and one solitary video game, *Space Invaders*. I thrashed that *Space Invaders* machine, pumping every 20 cent into it I could get hold of. I also played a lot of pinball, which I still love to play, and passed that enjoyment onto both of my kids.



The magazine would almost exclusively cover Amiga by 1989.

Around 15/16, I would bunk off school and ride my bike all the way into the city and hang around the arcades. In Adelaide, South Australia where I grew up, there was this arcade in the city called "Downtown" which was four floors of fun - with an entire floor with nothing but pinball machines and another floor with just video games. It was mecca. I played a lot of pinball, *Galaga* and *Galaxian*. That'll date me somewhat! Those were heady days, and despite being pretty rudimentary compared to today, the promise was there.

The first actual computer I had anything to do with was a friend's Commodore 64. I was 18 or 19 at the time, and playing in bands, he also had a Yamaha CX5 music computer, which really was something. Later on, he purchased an Amiga 1000 and that, to me, was the start of my fascination with computers.



There was a lot of room for contributors when the core magazine team was so small.

Which machines did you own yourself?

This is an odd one, but I've been fortunate enough to have access to many, many computers over the years without having to purchase many, as a result of my day job/career. When I worked for ACAR (*Australian Commodore and Amiga Review*) for example, I had access to all manner of computers - not just Commodore - as the publisher of the magazine (Gareth Powell) was also the computer editor of Australia's largest newspaper back then, *The Sydney Morning Herald*. As a result, we had a steady stream of everything and anything coming into the office for review. Companies (Commodore, Apple etc) were throwing equipment at him, so I had access to the latest and greatest of most things back then.

I think the first computer I purchased outright was an Apple Mac LCII, the



Such an amazing sight and I suppose the Eiffel Tower is also OK.



Galaxian was popular with score chasers.

Machine Code Tutorial Part 9

by Andrew Baines

Following on from Part 8, Andrew Baines looks at a program that formats the high-resolution screen with about the same ease.

So, previous, steady while looking at the code, I became frustrated. This is quite a common occurrence. It is caused partly by the lack of WYSIWYG or what you see is what you get.

Another cause is the OS's lack of support for memory standard, 80 columns screens. These are rare these days, displaying just the right amount of information, without wasting a thing in a 640 pixel wide or a 480 pixel high screen.

The result of all this is that I can't use any of the 80 column editors, even though the program being developed is a way out of the 80 column syndrome. It makes the high resolution screen a 2560x1024 screen, as shown by the text in a box of 80 columns.

And to give the powerful king on the side, there are no standard WYSIWYG editors that will produce anything like what you see when you write.

This is a computer journalist's dream and nightmare all rolled into one. The good part is that what appears on the screen is exactly what appears on the page. And what appears on the screen is exactly what appears on the page.

This program supports 80 columns and does away with the need for text editors. I really must read the code in one shot. It has been one, daybreak that says I have written this article with it and that is the end of the support line.

There are three that don't have enough control codes to show. Missing that I can use my article on the Amiga's ability to open the computer in Sydney. If I even think about control codes, the

computers that produce this page and command the Apple Laserwriter will cringe, cough, splutter, and simply refuse to do it for me.

This last state of affairs is not good enough. I use word processors too much. Another reason why I can't use any of the 80 column editors, even though the program being developed is a way out of the 80 column syndrome. It makes the high resolution screen a 2560x1024 screen, as shown by the text in a box of 80 columns.

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DRAGON'S LAIR

Entertainment
Clicked on Games
by Andrew Farrell



THE 15th issue of the Amiga is all about the dragon. It's a bit of a cliché, but the dragon is the heart of the game. The dragon is the heart of the game. The dragon is the heart of the game.

I have the documentation to this program. It's a bit of a cliché, but the dragon is the heart of the game. The dragon is the heart of the game. The dragon is the heart of the game.

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Sensible Golf

Sensible Software 1995

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It wasn't just games, programming guides were a big part of the magazine.

underpowered pizza box. I have owned quite a few machines to satisfy my nostalgia though, sadly all gone now. I've had a Commodore VIC-20 and 64, Atari ST, several Amiga 500s and way too many variations of Apple computers through the years. It's games consoles that I mostly collect, as well as oddball Apple products. I currently have Sony PS3/4/5, Xbox original (modded) and 360, Nintendo Wii (modded) and a sim rig setup for *Gran Turismo 7* and *Assetto Corsa Competizione*. Who would have thought that you could have your own sim rig and race people from all over the world from the comfort of your own home?

In the UK, we had a strong computer magazine scene by 1987/88. What were things like in Australia?

I used to go to the newsagents at Bondi Junction once a month and buy a copy of every Amiga mag there was, which was mostly UK mags. I'd then scour them back at ACAR to see what trends were taking place and what they looked like and focussed on. Great fun!

I think ACAR was the only dedicated Commodore magazine in Australia back then. We were booming in the late 80s, as the Amiga wave was taking place. There were no shortage of advertisers and products and peripherals for the Amiga, and the magazine was always packed with great info as the scene was thriving. It was peak time.

What led to you working at Australian Commodore and Amiga Review? Was working on magazines something you always wanted to do?

So my girlfriend at the time was looking for a job and had previous magazine and

Early issues had limited colour but still featured plenty of screenshots.

layout experience and landed the job at ACAR doing the page layout. At some point not too long after that, they were in need of a secretary - someone to answer the phone and do admin tasks. I didn't have a job at the time, being an under-employed musician, so I ended up doing the job. I really enjoyed it and looked after the subscriptions database, answered the phone, did the banking.

I also noodled around with the Mac and anything else we had kicking around. I had attempted to do a Bachelor of Fine Arts, but only lasted a year, being more interested in music. But I did have an interest in design and graphics, so it wasn't too much of a stretch to get into computer graphics, design and layout and there was plenty of hardware and software available at the ACAR office. So I went to town. The Mac interface really spoke to me, and I was hooked at that point, even though it was only black and white.

By the middle of 1988, the Amiga content was really ramping up. This follows a similar pattern in the UK - how did you view the Amiga in the late 80s? Still a serious computer, or were people buying it as a games machine to follow on from the C64?

It was still seen as a games machine, but I do recall there was a pivot to a business focus in the late 80s with the 2000. Personally, I just couldn't see it working, as the UI in particular wasn't really what I would call "normal people" (or non-computer people) ready. The barrier to entry was too high. It had a huge following all the same, as can be seen by the longevity of ACAR. Australia really embraced the VIC-20, 64 and the Amiga.

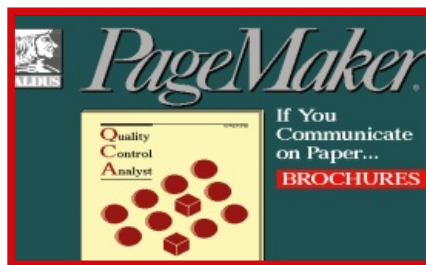
By 1989/90, you were working on the

All the latest Amiga releases were still out around the same time as in the UK.

mag and credited for layout. What did you use back then for mag design? Did you have input bringing in any new design ideas?

Eventually I ended up doing the design and layout for ACAR when my (now ex) girlfriend left. I was given free rein and did whatever I wanted with whatever tools I had. I was using a Mac Plus initially, but we moved to a Mac II with a bigger monitor (greyscale) which was a revelation. A decent size screen at last! Before there was *QuarkXpress*, or even *Aldus Pagemaker*, there was an incredibly good page design tool called *Ready, Set, Go!* by Letraset. This software was way way ahead of its time and amazingly fully featured and this is what I used to layout ACAR.

I would print the final pages to an Apple Laserwriter Plus, and they would go off to the printers for everything else to be added and the rest of the process and printing. No irony lost on me that ACAR was all produced on a Mac. I was involved with some attempts to transition to the Amiga, but I was never actually convinced or in favour of this, as the Mac was pretty mature as a platform for production and I just couldn't see the Amiga getting there... and I was right. ▶



There was a good chance you had this if owned a Mac. However the final edition was now almost 20 years ago!



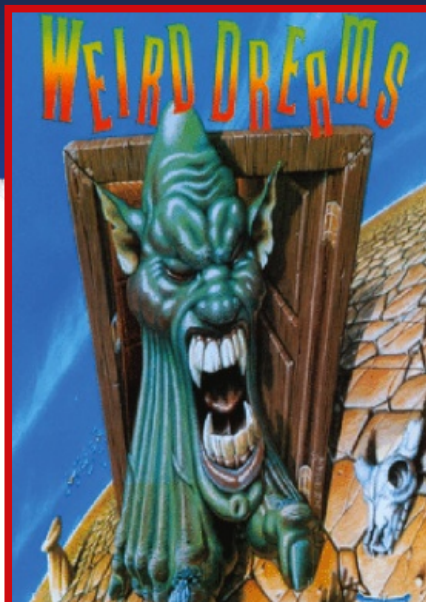
The magazine ended in 1996 like so many other UK titles.

The magazine lasted until 1996, and although you left years earlier, did you ever keep up to date with the Amiga scene at all?

Not really. I was a total Apple convert by the time I left ACAR. I have had a few Amigas over the years for nostalgia, but always ended up getting rid of them as I never used them. The nostalgia thing is strong, but time is always short. I have other hobbies that take my time, such as photography (all iPhone of course) and sim racing and console gaming. I don't do PC gaming at all. As I always say, I do computers for a day gig, I have no interest in them for my entertainment requirements, especially maintaining a Windows box. I've had plenty to do with them professionally.

Did you ever use the Amiga away from work? For music or design work?

I did use it, but mostly as a games machine and dabbling in music with *Bars and Pipes* and similar, or tooling around



Well the box art sure is weird. Actually, the whole game is weird too!

with *DPaint*. I was also playing in bands during my tenure at ACAR, so away from work I was busy doing that. I continued doing music until 1998, when I was living in New Zealand playing in a band with a record deal. There's videos out there on YouTube and you can get the music on Apple Music and Spotify.

You later became involved with Apple including becoming an Apple Specialist. How did all this happen?

Working at ACAR really set me on a career path in computing, having access to so much hardware and software back then. I chose Apple as my North Star for better (here we are) or worse (we've had some dark times too), as the Mac UI in particular spoke to me. I used the Mac day in and day out and became very familiar and entrenched in it at ACAR. I liked that I didn't have to know anything about how it worked. I liked the obfuscation and abstraction away from the hardware or workings of any backend. I learnt all about it later on in my career, but initially it was a production tool to get from A to B. This it did well.



One of Tristan's main loves is music. We like to think when he's not playing music, he plays Amiga.

What do you do nowadays?

Via a long and varied career, I am now a phone technician. I quit working with desktops and laptops about six years ago, focusing on the iPhone at first, but now I repair other brands as well. I went through a personal shift away from desktops and laptops as the iPhone became my primary computing device, and having worked with desktops for several decades, I a) wanted a change, and b) it seemed a natural progression. They are just micro computers that happen to make phone calls - in my experience the least used function. I do component level repairs, screens, batteries and so on.

Finally, what are some of your fave Amiga games?

Ah the real nostalgia! These are in no particular order, and not chosen because they are great titles per se, but because I have fond memories of playing them. Most of them were not exclusives, but available on the C64 and other platforms (Atari etc), but were great on the Amiga.

Brataccus was the first game that really had my attention. The way the mouse was used to control the character was really a revelation to me. *Starglider* also stood out as an indication of where 3D graphics were going to go. It was epic.

Here's the list: *Archon*, *Defender of the Crown*, *Brataccus*, *Captain Blood*, *Mindwalker*, *Crash Garrett*, *Kult*, *Starglider 1&2*, *Stunt Car Racer* (with two machines and a serial cable for two-player!), *Weird Dreams*, and *Ports of Call*.



Tristan's gaming rig for some serious racing.



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The Amigos Interview (Part 1)

- How does running a retro community impact your life?

by Duncan Styles



Guests:



Aaron



Brent



Boat

One day back in 2015, my mind wandered during my work lunch break and I ended up thinking about my old computer systems. I wondered if there was anything new going on in the world of Amiga. So I took to Google. One of the search results led me to a relatively new audio podcast.

At that time I wasn't really into podcasts, YouTube or really that bothered about retro computing at all, except for the odd day, once a year, when I would set up my Amstrad CPC or Amiga to play some old games. I listened to that podcast, entitled **Amigos: Everything Amiga**, and heard two people, one who knew a lot about the Amiga and one who knew very little, reviewing and chatting about one of the system's old games. Little did I realise that their banter would be the reason that I would end up writing articles for this very magazine, on staff with its sister publication and editing a weekly podcast. They are also the reason I have subsequently spent several hundred pounds on retro kit... so thanks for that, chaps!

John and Aaron are based in Hurricane in West Virginia, USA. I knew that the Amiga wasn't as popular over there as it was in the UK, so it was surprising to find two Americans dedicating a weekly show to it.



Hurricane, West Virginia, home of the Amigos. Connolly's hosted the Amigos-created Boatfest this year.

Their podcast quickly added video and over time they've introduced more shows, starting with **ARG Presents**, which started in February 2018. This show isn't system specific; any system and any genre of game can be selected with a spin of the - now infamous - wheel. Episode 17 of ARG Presents saw John step aside and Aaron was joined by his brother Brent as a regular host. John soon returned to recording multiple shows however when **1200XL**, **The CoCo Show**, **Our Sinclair** and **The ST Show** were added into the line-up, becoming monthly releases.

At time of writing, they have just passed 6000 followers on YouTube, and there is a dedicated



Amigos - Everything Amiga is the only Amiga focussed podcast still available.



The boys tucking in with some Amigos community members - (L-R) Aaron, L. Curtis Boyle, Brent, John, Jason Warnes and Retro Rewind's Frank Linhares.



ARG Presents is the Amigos network's other headline show, covering retro systems of all kinds.

core of fans who get together every week to watch the shows being recorded live on Twitch. I was curious about their experiences running a retro gaming channel/community and the impact it has had on their lives.

Gentlemen, thanks for speaking to us. First of all, can you please tell us a bit about yourselves, the channel and the content that can be found there?

John: My name is John "Boatofcar" Shawler. I'm a retro enthusiast, band director, and practitioner of the Japanese sword martial art laido.

Amigos Retro Gaming was born out of the friendship between Aaron, Brent, and I and our love of retro gaming. We produce podcasts and other videos mostly about retro computers, but occasionally about retro and modern consoles.

Aaron: Well, I'm Amigo Aaron, of Hurricane, West Virginia. I'm a father of one boy, Luke, and I work for the Kentucky State Police as a Breath Alcohol Technician. I've been doing The Amigos with Boat since 2015, plus a whole host of shows that came after. Aside from retro gaming, I'm a pro wrestling and MMA fan; comic book collector; I'm into old school role playing games; classic radio shows; board games; pinball and arcade machines, and a million other things.

Brent: Hello! My name is Brent Doughty, referred to as THE Brent on the show since Amigo Aaron wanted a two-syllable name to say and apparently this was the best he could come up with. I'm a co-host on ARG Presents which is posted on the Amigos Retro Gaming YouTube channel (hence the ARG part of the name). I grew up in a time where I got to experience the resurgence of video games at home and the death of the arcade at large. While my past personal experience with home computers such as the Amiga is a bit limited, since I grew up as more of a console kid, my heart truly lies inside a coin slot. Since starting

my time on ARG Presents, my eyes have been opened to so many new systems.

On our show, ARG Presents, we add viewer suggested systems and topics to a prize wheel and give it a spin. Whatever it lands on, be it the Ohio Scientific Challenger Computer or Submarine Games, we research the topic, pick two games, and present them to the audience every week. It's amazing some of the computers and games you can come across when you dig deep into video games past!

How do you know each other? Where did you meet?

Brent: John and I met in high school band. He was a couple years behind me at the time, but we had similar hobbies and plenty of long bus rides to discover this. As I went off to college and he did the same, we lost track of each other for several years. Everything kinda came full circle when I ended up marrying his prom date!

Aaron, however... the dude just kept showing up to my house. He'd show up at dinner, eat our food, play our games, and would just never leave! I'd be coming out of the shower and BAM! - there he is again. Mom and Dad liked

him well enough I guess. Eventually, you learn to accept it.

John: I met Brent in high school band. He was a senior when I was a freshman, and so I thought he was cool by default. I met Aaron through Brent in 2010, when I moved back home from living overseas.

Aaron: I met Boat through my brother Brent, since they were buddies in high school. Boat, as I recall, came back from overseas and started showing up at parties Brent used to hold most Saturday nights.

Which systems did you grow up with, and what was your favourite genre of games? Do any titles stand out?

Brent: I grew up a Nintendo kid. While I was never a Nintendo fanboy - when you can only afford one system, you're kinda forced to pick a side. I also grew up in the time of video game rentals, so while my personal library was small, my weekends were full of a variety of gaming. The only games I recall owning were *Wizards & Warriors* and, *shudder* *Deadly Towers*. From there, I moved on to the Super Nintendo and then into PC gaming. My all-time favourite game was in the arcades: *X-Men Vs Street Fighter*. So ▶



The original Amigos Studios was in a rather spacious basement under John's house.



John and Aaron at CoCoFest 2023, in questionable uniform.



The legendary wheel from the ARG Presents show.



John's not only a podcast ninja, he's an accomplished martial artist.

much over-the-top sprite-on-sprite action!

Aaron: My dad was a forward thinking guy - he knew he wanted to get me a computer. What he got was the Odyssey 2 from Magnavox, which was basically a console with a membrane keyboard and not a computer, but his heart was in the right place, and we did love it.

Eventually, when we figured out what we had wasn't a computer, he picked us up a Tandy TRS-80 Color Computer 2 from Radio Shack. He knew a guy from work who set us up with a ton of copied tapes, and we were off to the races at that point. I loved that machine, and we used it for quite a while before upgrading to a CoCo 3, and then we graduated to the Tandy PC range with a Tandy 1000 SL and then finally a Tandy 1000 TL.

Gaming wise, I grew up in the arcades, so that was my bread and butter. I loved arcade-style action games, and we got clones of most of the good ones from the O2 forward. I was a big fan of *Pick Axe Pete*, *K.C. Munchkin*, and *Quest for the Rings* on the O2, and on the CoCo it was *Donkey King*, *Kron*, and *Sailor*. Man, all those great arcade clones.

John: My first computer was an Atari 1200XL, which was the unpopular



John may not be an Amiga veteran, but he sure has a nice A1000.

successor to Atari's 400/800 line. My dad bought it second hand from one of his work friends, and it was already obsolete when we got it in either 1986 or 1987. After years of begging, I got a NES in 1990, followed by a SNES in 1992 and a N64 in 1996. I also played a few games on my dad's work IBM XT clone, but I was mostly a console gamer in my formative years once the NES entered the picture.

When I was younger, I liked JRPGs and adventure titles. Now that I'm older, I prefer arcade action games and games based on card and board games.

My favourite games are *Do! Run Run* (arcade), *Chrono Trigger* (SNES), *Bump 'n' Jump* (NES), *Tecmo Super Bowl* (NES), and *Pilotwings* (SNES).

When and why did the initial idea for a podcast come about? Brent, ARG was already underway when you started. Was it an easy decision to jump on board?

Aaron: I was an avid fan of Shane R. Monroe's Retro Gaming Radio from way back in 1998... it was the first "podcast" I ever heard, way before that term was coined. Eventually other shows like that started popping up - I drove a lot, so I ate them up. I had owned several Amigas for decades by the early 2010s, and I could not figure out why no one was covering the Amiga! The games were awesome! I was baffled.

I had considered doing a podcast with Brent around the same time...we did about three episodes of "Classical Gas", but we didn't stick with it. I always told myself if I ever did a show, it would be about the underserved Commodore Amiga.

John: In 2013, I had started a podcast with one of my college friends that ran



Aaron is a big fan of the glave from Krull!

for about a year. Aaron listened to it and suggested we do a podcast about the Amiga together, probably since I'd figured out how to do all the backend distribution stuff. Rob O'Hara's podcasts also had a big effect on me - I thought if he could do it, we could give it a try! Aaron got a new job around this time which postponed the launch of our show until July of 2015.

Aaron: Keep in mind Boat had never played or seen an Amiga at this point. He pestered me for a good while, as I recall, before he finally got me over in the basement to record the very first episode of Amigos. I never thought I'd be doing it week in and week out for going on eight years!

Brent: I stepped in for John on Episode 17 of ARG Presents, as his life at the time was getting really busy. At this point, I think I had guest hosted a couple of Amigos shows and thought it would be about that level of commitment. I love to talk about and share my gaming hobby with others and the show has not only allowed me to do that, but also expanded my appreciation and understanding of gaming. Hard to pass that up!

You have gathered a community from all over the world. What do you think it is that people like about your shows?

Brent: No drama! Yeah, we bicker at each other on ARG Presents, but it's (usually) all in good fun. We get you in, introduce you to something you might have never heard of before, have some laughs, and send you on your way. We're also consistent. We do everything in our power to post a show every single week. Lastly, I think folks see that we're always striving to do better. Our audio, our lighting, our scenes... all credit to Aaron



Brent loves his retro systems... when he can get out from under cats.



Aaron has even featured in a game on the CoCo - Space Pirate Kimiko!

for our improvement in these areas – he really gets in there and tinkers with stuff until it's as good as we can make it with the resources we have available.

Aaron: Honestly, Boat is a community building machine, so all the credit to him in that respect. It's a good question though. I think, at first, people were really into Amiga and ready to settle for me and Boat jabbering week after week.

After all this time though... it's surprising if I'm honest. I remember when we first started getting emails and then gifts... we were totally baffled that *anyone* was out there listening. I think we amuse people. I think we're pretty down to earth types, and that resonates with folks. I think we are honest with our audience.

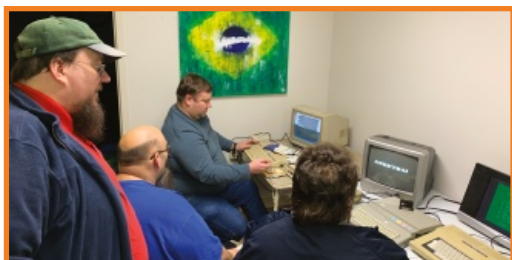
They are a forgiving bunch to be sure. We've had every bit of microphone issues, camera issues, streaming issues... I don't think there's too many things that we didn't screw up, but our friends have stuck with us over the years. It's helped me keep faith in humanity, and that's the truth.

John: I think people like Aaron, honestly. He's a super friendly, gregarious character that has the unique ability to cheer you up no matter what. I think people recognize too that Aaron and I are friends - when they listen to us on the show, we act the same way that we do in real life.

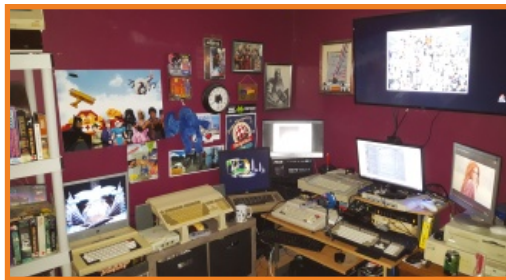
What effect has the channel had on your life and has anything about it surprised you?

John: Having a weekly podcast is a big commitment. I think about it all the time. It's a major part of my life, and we've been doing it so long I can't imagine not doing it. Amigos has been running for almost eight years at this point - longer than I was in middle and high school combined!

The biggest surprise is that we've been able to keep the ball rolling this long. I read somewhere that the average podcast lasts six episodes, and



Brent and Aaron check out systems at the retro hardware event the boys run - the Teays Valley Classic Computer Club.



Aaron has an extensive range of retro hardware at his home.

it's not hard to see why. Schedules conflict, you have other commitments... it's difficult to make things line up and to keep motivated. But again, our friendship and the fact that we don't want to let each other down keeps us trucking.

Brent: I know so much more about gaming than I ever thought possible. Because of that, I've met so many more wonderful people than I thought was possible. Some of them might be a few lines in a comment section talking about how the game we reviewed was their first project or deeper connections like we share in our Discord community. These are people and experiences I would have never sought out on my own, but I'm a better person for having them.

Aaron: At first, I found it very intimidating. It took a good while for me to get used to it. I worked in radio for a while back in college, so I was used to that sort of gig, but it's more unnerving to be using your own material and being yourself.

When Boat told me we could do the Patreon thing, I only had a passing knowledge of what it was. Sincerely, in the early days of the show, I can't tell you how often I would take the \$30 or \$40 I got from Patreon and go right to the grocery store with it for my family, or pay the water bill. Times were tough for me back then, and I'm eternally grateful that folks were and are kind enough to send us a few bucks. So that was a huge surprise.

The effect it's had on my life is... well, it's a total change in my life now. Early on, it wasn't a huge deal, but as we grew, more and more time and energy was spent preparing. It's funny, occasionally both myself and Boat hit the wall... so it's always good to have someone there to keep the ball rolling. The show also gave me my good and dear friend Boat... when we started this show, he was just a dude I saw at Brent's every few weeks. I've seen Boat week in and week out now going on eight years. If you'd told me in 2015 what I'd be doing in 2023, I'd have called you a liar! 🚀

That's all from the boys at the Amigos for now, but we'll be back with them next issue to learn a bit about how their community has evolved into something more...

If you want to check them out, head to their YouTube and Twitch channels at www.youtube.com/amigosretrogaming and www.twitch.tv/amigosretrogaming. Their website is www.everythingamiga.com.



Amigos



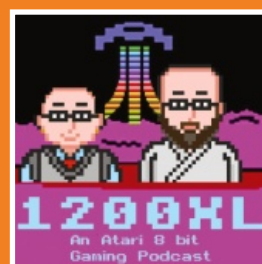
ARG Presents



Our Sinclair



The CoCo Show



1200XL



Atari ST Show

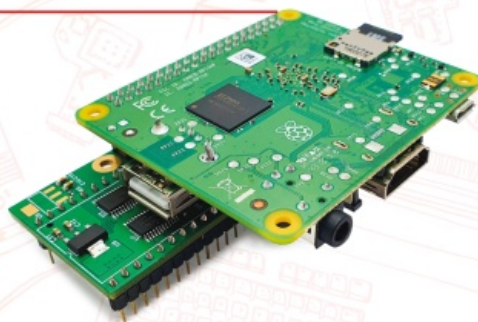
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- For Amiga 500 and Amiga 2000
- Full 68030 processor clocked at 50MHz
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- Amiga 500 and 500+, and Amiga 2000 compatibility (in place of the original CPU).
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- Multiple CPU configuration options (68020/68030/68040).
- 128MB of Z3 memory.
- RTG Graphics Card with high resolution modes through HDMI.
- Wifi card to connect the Amiga to Internet or to a LAN.
- Pre-configured 32GB SD card with licensed AmigaOS and legal applications & games.
- CPU relocater adapter to fit easily the accelerator into the standard Amiga 500/500+ case.



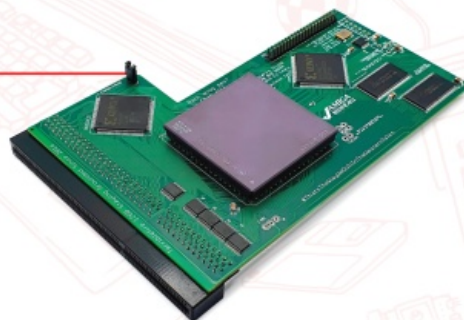
PiStorm32 Lite Amiga 1200

- Amiga 1200 compatibility (through the A1200 internal accelerator slot)
- 68040 and 2000 MIPS with Raspberry 4
- RTG Graphics Card with high resolution modes through HDMI.
- Wifi card to connect the Amiga to Internet or to a LAN (not yet implemented).
- Pre-configured 32GB SD card with licensed AmigaOS and legal applications & games.



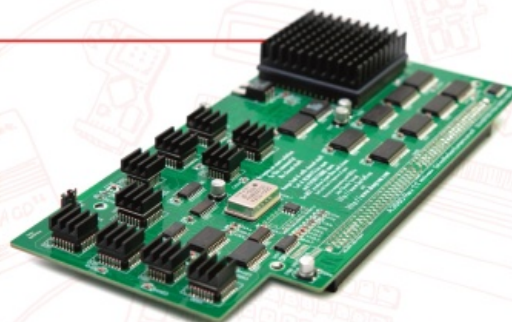
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- For Amiga 1200
- Motorola 68LC060 rev4 CPU with MMU and without FPU
- 128MB of FAST ROM memory on-board
- Fast IDE controller for Hard Disks or CF/SD card



A3660 turbocard

- For Amiga 4000 (T) and Amiga 3000 (T)
- Motorola 68LC060 processor rev4 with MMU and without FPU
- Clocked at 50Mhz (39,02 MIPS) or 60Mhz (46,82 MIPS)
- Heat sinks for CPU and GALs included
- High quality PCB. Gold surface finish



SDBox V2

Compatible with any Amiga computer (note the A1000 needs a gender changer for the parallel port)

Support hot swapping

Partition size: up to 4GB

Easy installation: you don't need to open your computer

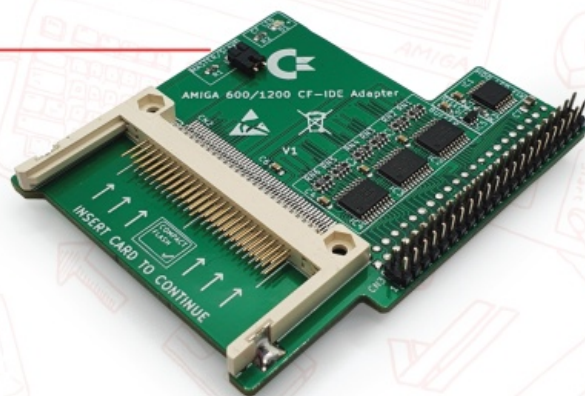
Easy use: SD card is mounted as any other device or hard disk partition at the Workbench desktop

FAT32 supported, making it easy to transfer files between your Amiga and others computers or devices



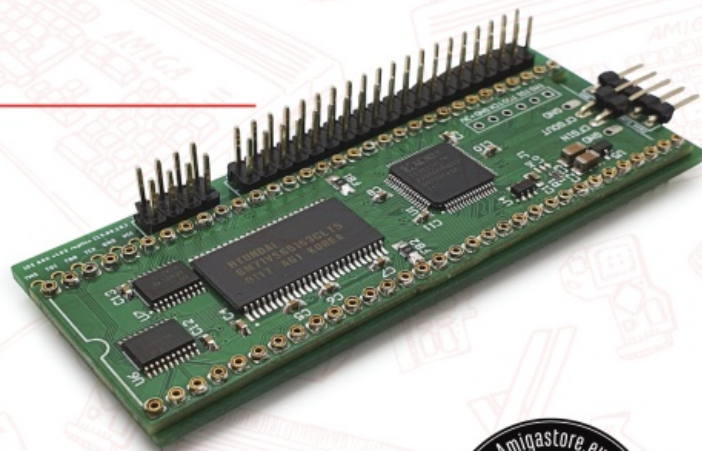
A1200/600 CF-IDE Adapter (buffered)

- For Amiga 1200 and Amiga 600
- Buffer for the 24 IDE signals to stabilize data transfers
- CF card slot on-board
- Additional 44pin IDE connector that lets you use longer IDE data cables without errors (100cm)
- CF card (on the CF card slot) and an IDE device (attached to the 44pin IDE connector) can be used simultaneously
- Jumper to set the on-board CF slot like Master or Slave
- It fix the issues with the A1200/600 IDE LED and CF/SD cards
- Compatible with AmigaOS 1.3, 2.1, 3.1, 3.9, 3.1.4, 3.2, and 3.2.1
- PCMCIA friendly



IDE 68K + GottaGoFastRAM 8MB

- Autoboot IDE controller
- 8MB of Autoconfig Fast RAM
- For with Amiga 500, 1000, 2000, CDTV, and Terrible Fire TF534
- Compatible with our trapdoor Memory Expansions for Amiga 500 and Amiga 500 Plus
- GottaGoFastRAM is installed on top of the CPU socket and the original processor on top of it. Therefore, the space inside your Amiga is still available for additional hardware.
- Compatible with Kickstart 3.2, 3.X, 3.1, 2.05, and with our modified Kickstart 1.3 (available as option)



A History of LightWave

- It's time to don our archaeological hats and map some 3D caves. by Gareth Qually

We all know *LightWave*. I would argue it is the most fondly remembered of the Amiga 3D applications, and even if you have never actually used it, you will likely know about it. No doubt its association with many films and television shows has a lot to do with that, but even so, it's well known throughout the Amiga community on its own merits. NewTek can take a huge portion of the credit for ushering in an era of desktop-based 3D animation.

In the television and film industry, *LightWave* was the application that broke the grip of high-end 3D animation tools like *Softimage 3D* and *Alias Power Animator*. But don't think for a minute that this was the only place that it shone. Nearly every industry that uses 3D design and animation used *LightWave* very effectively since its beginnings. Let's take a closer look at its history and why this package has remained a favourite for many loyal fans around the world for over 30 years.

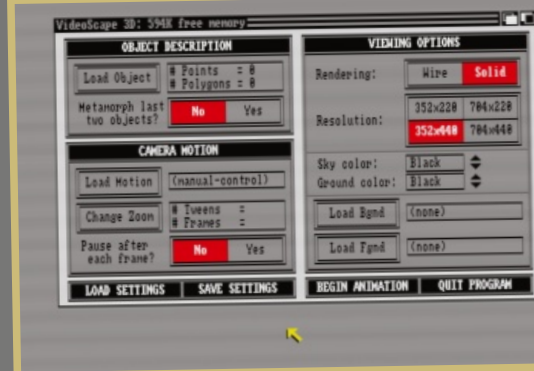
Two sides of the same coin

The architecture of *LightWave* was defined by its origins. Before *LightWave* was a product, there were actually two completely separate programs - *Modeler 3D* and *VideoScape 3D*. Surprisingly enough, they were created by two alumni of Lockheed's Missiles and Space division - the modelling program being created by Stuart Ferguson, and the animation/

rendering program by Allen Hastings. The two programs were published by Aegis early on in the Amiga's life, 1987 for *VideoScape 3D* and 1988 for *Modeler 3D*, and they were part of the first generation of applications for the platform. As such, they were more products of the author's passion, rather than products servicing an existing market.

As their names suggest, these became the modelling and layout portions of the future *LightWave*. Even today, the program has this split between object creation and scene layout; lighting and surfacing. This was seen as a benefit - even a necessity - back then, as memory and processing resources were limited. So splitting off functionality into separate programs or modules made a tonne of sense.

Looking back at these separate pieces of software, they received middling reviews, but then they were not comparable to *Sculpt-Animate 4D* or *Turbo Silver 3.0* - the big players at that time. *VideoScape 3D* made it to version 2, but *Modeler 3D* never made it past its first release before NewTek came calling and persuaded both of these fellows to join their team to create the next leap in 3D. The time they spent with the other geniuses at NewTek was invaluable. The company was a master of video production, and that influence was clearly infused into the DNA of *LightWave*.



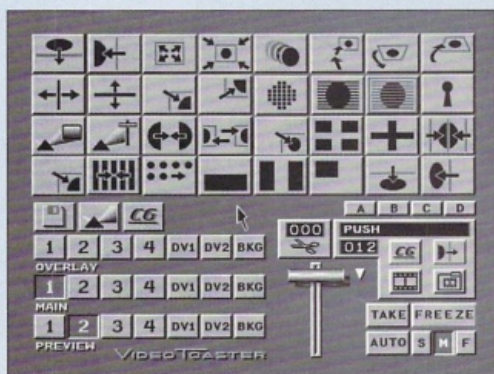
VideoScape 3D - to be perfectly honest, this was as far as I could get with the program. More investigation is definitely needed.

The concept of the Video Toaster was well known long before its launch, having been announced at the World of Commodore Expo in 1987. The website lightwave3d.com mentions there were problems with the Toaster chipset which caused delays with the launch, and that Toaster delay no doubt aided in the development of *LightWave*.

They had a huge task in front of them to stitch these two separate programs together - and they also needed time to make sure the design language and user interface made sense. I suspect both Hastings and Ferguson were working right up to the wire to get the software ready! This might have been why there was very little mention about *LightWave* until close to the launch of the Toaster -

BREADCRUMBS & PIXELDUST

The Toaster Arrives



Video junkies will be jumping up and down in glee when they see NewTek's *Video Toaster*. It's an Amiga-controlled

frame buffers which can load individual frames in under three seconds. NewTek will be releasing an optional



Modeler - rather rudimentary by today's standards, but it was revolutionary in 1988.

This image was captured at NAB in July 1990 by .info mag. Notice no 3D button!



I am sure I am not alone in saying this is what made me stand up and take notice of LightWave.

NewTek may have been keeping their cards close to their chest, just in case the software was not ready by the time the Toaster launched.

Reading the press around that time, you have to go to 1990 - the year of the Toaster launch - to see the first mentions of it. The magazine *.info* talked about it for the first time in their November 1990 issue, one month before the Toaster was released. *Amiga World*, in their detailed coverage of the Toaster in the October 1990 issue, mentioned the industry knew they were developing a paint and 3D program, but there were no details available. They were then surprised when *Toaster Paint* and *LightWave 3D* were included.

So the world was introduced to the wonderful world of *LightWave* through the Video Toaster. But it was not immediately obvious there was a massive 3D application included. All of these wonders were hidden behind an innocuous button labelled "3D".

The journey begins...

The initial reviews for *LightWave* were overwhelmingly positive. I think, for a

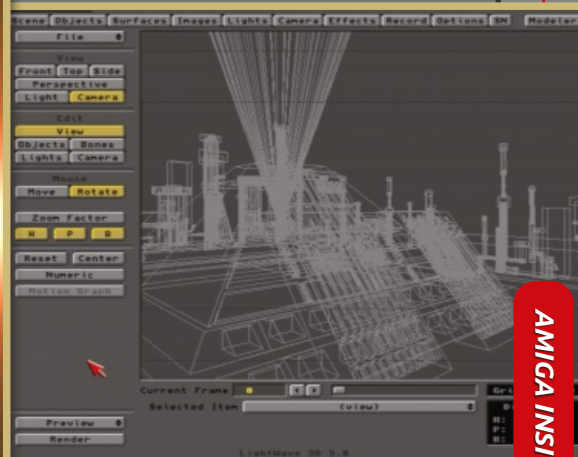
Where are they now?

After ten years at NewTek, Allen Hastings and Stuart Ferguson founded Luxology with a core team of *LightWave* developers to make a new 3D program called *Modo*. Ten years later, Foundry, who are big in the VFX world, bought Luxology. Allen is still there today as Head of Rendering, but Stuart spent just shy of six further years there before moving on to Apple as a senior software engineer.

lot of people, the ease of use was welcomed. 3D software was (and still is) difficult to make approachable.

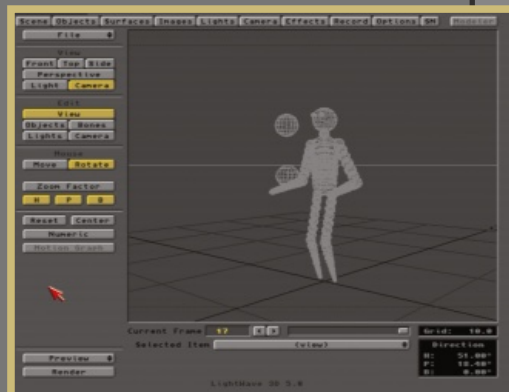
Eric Daniels in the May 1991 issue of *Amiga World* had this to say about the new package, "*LightWave 3D*", which is bundled with the NewTek Video Toaster, is easily the most professional-looking 3-D program for the Amiga. Its user interface is elegant, powerful, and incredibly easy to master. The overall layout and control logic shines through in the no-nonsense, grey, 3-D-style buttons, which are logically and attractively grouped. Every time I come back to this program, I almost sigh with relief. It just feels like home."

Frank McMahon in the March 1991 issue of *Amazing Computing* split the review into a Layout and Modeler section. The former section received this summary:

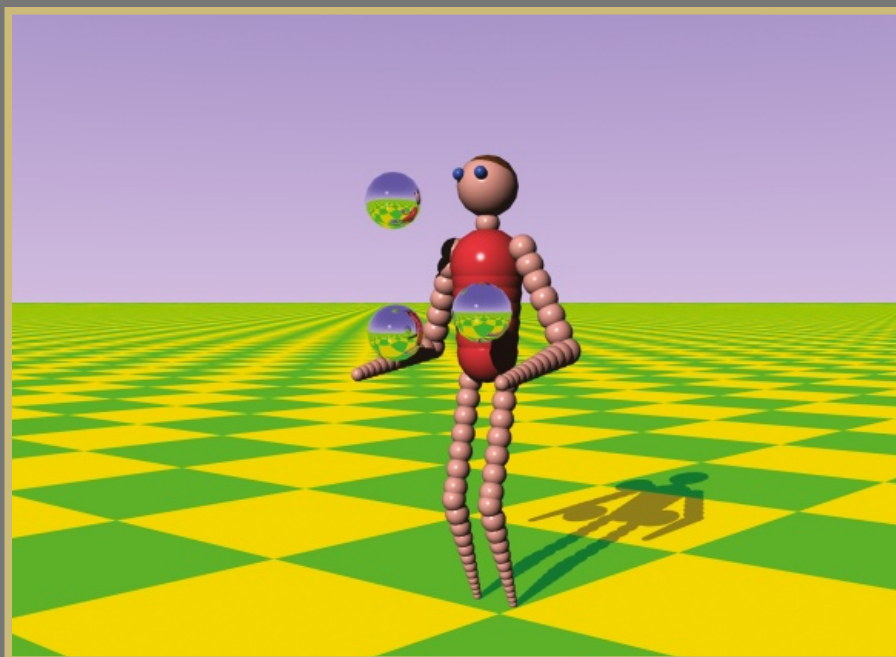


Before we get to the gorgeous render, we work in this detailed wireframe view. With practice, it becomes second nature.

"While these complaints are minor, I have nothing but the highest praise for *LightWave 3D*. Allen Hastings has created a gem of a 3-D rendering program that is easy, logical, and a



Even in wireframe, any Amiga lover will know what this is.



This was found in the demos folder. Brilliant idea to recreate the famous 3D animation.



Yes, the Amiga was so great, it could create an Atari ST!



pleasure with excellent output, a wealth of features and fascinating texture control. *LightWave 3D* is not *like* a high-end system, it *is* a high-end system." The latter received: "There's not too much to say about *LightWave Modeler*. It's pretty similar to most 3-D modelers and doesn't break any new ground.[...] On the plus side the program is fast and accurate."

Background Basics 101

A few of you may be asking what the Video Toaster was. It was a revolutionary hardware and software product that was aimed squarely at the television production market. In this one product, it replaced loads of discrete pieces of hardware that were dedicated to a single task, and it did this at a fraction of the cost. It literally caused a seismic shift in the industry.

Some of the features of the Toaster were the ability to layer video over graphics (or vice versa) with the overlay genlock and luminance keyer. There was a four input video switcher with an untold amount of transition effects. You could control the brightness, contrast and colour of your video as well as add digital video effects on your video feed in real time. All of this was done with 24-bit colour precision. The system also had a real time frame grabber, two 24-bit frame buffers to store high quality images, a character generator for titles and a 24-bit paint package. And most importantly, it had *LightWave*. For more on the history of the Toaster, check out AA Issue 18.

That is quite an endorsement for a first release. It was not all cheers and high fives though. As was to be expected, there were issues. It lacked ray-tracing, which was not necessarily a problem, but the competition did have it, so it was a point of comparison. The bigger issue was the reliance on the Toaster for output. Here is the *Amiga World* review again: "To make an animation viewable on an Amiga, you would have to save your images as separate RGB files (which are huge); next, using a program such as *The Art Department (ASDG)*, you would need to convert each one down to HAM and then compress them into an animation." Even if you automated that work, it was needlessly complicated, not to mention a huge hog on disk space.

So how did *LightWave* get its teeth into the film and television market? We all know of the well told story of *Babylon 5*, Ron Thornton, *Star Trek: Voyager* and others. That helped give *LightWave* the limelight, but it was the Video Toaster's massive success in the television market that really gave *LightWave* the opportunity to get into thousands of artists' hands. The US has hundreds, if not thousands of local television stations and they could all afford a Video Toaster. *LightWave* then became a standard of sorts for so much bread and butter 3D animation on television, especially because the Amiga played so well with television signals. As those artists grew in their careers and started their own studios, guess which package they preferred to use?

Version highlights

When you look at the user interface and features present from version 1.0, there

Sitting in the Modeler, getting ready for showtime is our MIDI supporting friend.

is a focus on television terminology, rather than abstract concepts that would be more at home in a scientific or engineering setting. This set *LightWave* apart from the other 3D programs of the day in a big way. For the first few versions of *LightWave*, it was tied to the Video Toaster, and could not run without it. It became a very expensive dongle and did limit its growth in PAL based countries, as there was little need for a NTSC product. Warm and Fuzzy Logic Inc did help with the release of their *LightRave* product later on, which allowed *LightWave* to work without the Toaster... but it was not cheap, with a suggested retail price of \$499.

After version 1.0, it would be two years before we got version 2.0. That felt like

The post Amiga years

LightWave is still around, even though it has had a bit of a torrid time over the last decade. There is a long list of reasons as to why, and it has resulted in it slowly fading away as a go-to 3D application for the various industries that previously used it. The exciting bit of news is that it has potentially been rescued from obscurity by a small band of passionate users, who have bought *LightWave* from VizRT, the current owners. It is all fresh news and things are moving fast. With some hard work and a bit of luck, *LightWave's* future is looking bright.



a long time, and it was, as technology never stopped moving. But to give NewTek the benefit of the doubt, they were dealing with an avalanche of orders and support requests - so no doubt there was a laundry list of improvements and bug fixes to be addressed. Looking at the manual for Toaster version 2, they announced over 150 new features with updates to both the *Layout* and *Modeler* programs.

Some big ticket items were the inclusion of raytracing, rendering speed improvements and 2K resolutions for film & print. There was support for more object formats like *Wavefront* and *AutoCAD DXF*, which was important for fitting into existing tool

chains and workflows. Spline controls were a massive addition, allowing for greatly improved control over animation. You could now see movement in graph form, and tweaking the keyframes became much more intuitive. Lastly, but greatly appreciated for complex scenes, was twice the amount of points and polygons permitted in a single scene.

When speaking to author Dan Ablan, he noted that version 3.0 was a great update.

In his words, "This I remember well - they introduced yellow buttons. Amazing! I could see which button was selected in the interface with the added interface enhancements. I was so excited about this release, I called in sick to work, drove two hours to the closest Amiga dealership and bought my upgrade. I spent the rest of the night installing the 30+ floppy disk based upgrade."

Version 3.5 was a very big deal for one single reason. It was the first version that did not need the Video Toaster. Yes, us PAL countries could finally buy *LightWave* without wasting money on the Toaster! Instead you got a small dongle, which was pretty much the norm in the industry for a lot of software products at the time.

Those were the days

Over the lifetime of the Amiga, we got six definitive versions of *LightWave*. It was 1995 when NewTek released the last version for our machines, version 5.0. They hung on for as long as possible, but as with many companies, they had to plan for the future. It was in the same year, starting on version 4.0, that *LightWave* released for Intel based Windows PCs and DEC Alphas. Version 5.0 followed with SGI and Macintosh being included as supported systems.

More than any other Amiga developer, NewTek really pushed itself out into the diverse computing ecosystem that existed in the mid 90s. And it made

sense to do it. Not only were a lot of their customers using these heterogeneous systems, but the industry was changing rapidly. Which hardware platforms and operating systems were going to be around in the next five years was a difficult question to answer. SGI was riding high at that point, Apple

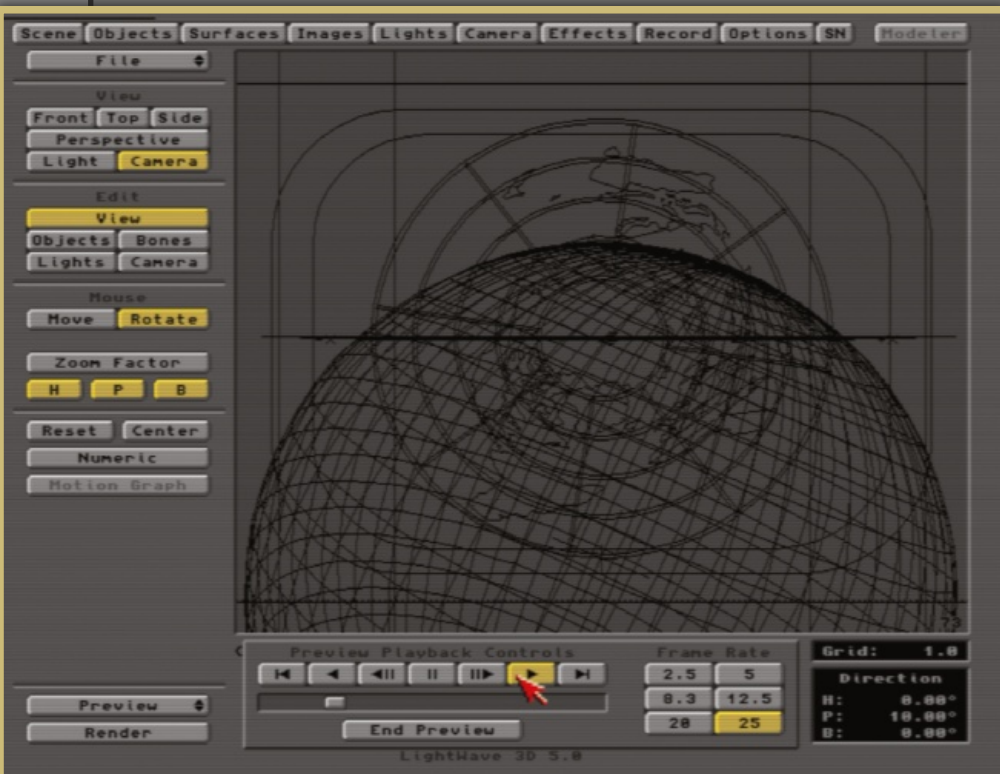
Starting your LightWave journey

The software is a great way to get into 3D design and animation and we certainly have a bunch of Amiga *LightWave* experts we can call on when we get stuck.

Installing *LightWave* is not the easiest of things to accomplish. Muadib over at Amiga Ray Tracing Society has made a great guide to getting the last version, 5.0r, installed and running on your machine. While you are there, you may as well do some of his brilliant tutorials. <https://www.amigaraytracers.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=36>.

Kevin Quattro has his entertaining channel focused on *LightWave* on the Amiga. www.youtube.com/@HoldandModify

Lastly, one of the gems on the internet is amigavideo.net and they have a load of classic *LightWave* tutorials in VHS glory. Look out for more on amigavideo.net in a future issue. <https://amigavideo.net/category/software/lightwave/>



Campfire stories

LightWave's history on the Amiga is rather short compared to the product's 23 year heritage. I am sure you are wondering what happened after NewTek and *LightWave* left the Amiga scene. I know it is hard to believe, but it is even more exciting than the first few years and there are more than a few brilliant stories to be told. The future was looking bright for the software and the company, but trouble was brewing inside the corporation. Even though the software was a leading package of the day, the storm clouds were closing in and a lot of people were going to get wet. Look out for further tales of this spectacular software package in our sister publication *Pixel Addict*.

Working in the layout feels so fluid and filmmaker-like. No wonder it captured the hearts of so many.

less so, and there were some predictions made based on that status quo. In hindsight, we know how that played out. So developing and releasing versions of *LightWave* for most popular systems was a shrewd move. It definitely kept the *LightWave* flame burning brightly into the new millennium.

We had it good

We were very lucky on the Amiga platform when it came to 3D packages. It literally was the computer that brought desktop-based animation to the fore. When *LightWave* launched, it did so into a crowded market, and yet it managed to hold its own against the likes of *Imagine*, *Caligari*, *Real 3D* and *Sculpt Animate 4D*. I find it interesting that all these packages managed to thrive together with so much competition. Maybe it was because no single package could see themselves as masters of everything, and actually relied on the competition to build a stronger set of tools.

We should all tip the hat in *LightWave's* direction as it did more than any other package when it came to garnering attention. Looking back on the first half of the last decade of the last century (*Ed* - "Did you really have to say that - we're old!"), we had a piece of 3D magic that entranced an entire industry. We were privileged to have *LightWave* start on our beloved platform and it did us proud. It still does.

Passionate tales of polygons past

- Time to get out some chairs out for visiting friends

LightWave has held a special place in many people's hearts for some time, and so I reached out to some people who still cherish and use *LightWave* to this day. I spoke to Christopher Barnatt who uses *LightWave* on his YouTube channel "Explaining Computers". I also spoke to Dan Ablan, who has authored nine *LightWave* books throughout a varied creative career, Kevin Quattro from the "Hold and Modify" YouTube channel and Ben Vost who ran *3D World* magazine and wrote *LightWave* documentation for years. As always, the best conversations take their own direction, so read on...

How did you get your start with 3D - more specifically with 3D on the Amiga?

Chris

My first Amiga was an A500 purchased to delve into computer graphics, although I did play some games! But on this machine, I mainly ran *Photon Paint* and a word processor. I then briefly migrated to an Atari ST, before coming back to an A500+ with a hard drive, and, in time, an A1200 with various accelerators and drives.

With this later setup, I remember having some software - I cannot recall the name - that allowed hand drawn animation to (be) digitised from a connected black and white CCTV camera. This allowed "line tests" to be shot and played back on the Amiga. I'd previously shot such tests on film, so this was my first use of an Amiga in helping to make animated films - and specifically cartoon animations that I was producing at the time for a

BBC TV show called *Hartbeat*.

The first 3D package I used ran on a Sinclair QL, and I remember using it to produce a wireframe of a rotating rocket, which was then printed frame by frame on a dot-matrix printer, and traced onto animation cells to be shot on film, again for the *Hartbeat* show. And this was very much the trigger to get my first Amiga, on which, for a few years, I ran the *Caligari TrueSpace* 3D package, before turning to *LightWave*.

In the early 1990s, I remember making my first 3D title sequence in

Chris made this for his YouTube channel!



Christopher Barnatt



With every VIDEO TOASTER[®] you get the 6 most powerful graphics products ever created for the Amiga...

1. **LightWave 3D Modeling, Rendering, and Animation** Create true network quality 3D graphics in 1536 x 1024 resolution with 16.8 million colors. *LightWave* says it "absolutely blows away everything."
2. **Overlay Genlock and Luminance Key** Overlay Amiga graphics on any live video source. Use the luminance key to overlay live video like the weathermap effect.
3. **ToasterPaint 24-bit Hi-res Paint System** This feature-packed tool is the only PC-based paint system with 24-bit 1100 extended broadcast quality video.
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5. **Toaster Character Generator 24-bit 35 nanosecond resolution** Twice the resolution of software-only Amiga CG's and over 4000 times the color.
6. **Toaster Real-Time 24-bit Frame Grabber** Freeze video instantly from your color video camera, camcorder, laserdisc, or cable TV.

and something truly phenomenal... your own TV studio.

7. **Toaster Digital Video Effects** For the first time you can process live video on your desktop just like the networks do. The Toaster lets you warp, spin, zoom, trail, and sequence any of four live video sources in real-time and in 24-bit color.
8. **Four-Input Production Switcher** Perform unique fade and pattern transitions between any of seven sources. Many of which are impossible even on high-end gear.
9. **ChromaFX Color Processor** Complete control of the brightness, contrast and color of your video. Give your video an old film sepia tone or high-contrast look.

Call now for the Video Toaster Demo Tape & See for yourself!

See the incredible results possible with the Video Toaster. Starting NewTek's own fully 3D-rendered, and featuring animation by 3D artists and *LightWave* programmer Allen Hastings. Use the Toaster itself, this videotape will knock your socks off. \$4.95 includes shipping and handling. Visa, MC, AmEx or CDD orders accepted. Call (800) 945-8934 or (915) 354-1146.

\$4.95 includes shipping and handling
1-800-945-8934

Circle 108 on Reader Service card.

\$1595 The Video Toaster card and software are available at an Amiga dealer near you.

NewTek

NewTek advertised the Toaster extensively, but seemed to shy away from promoting *LightWave* on its own.

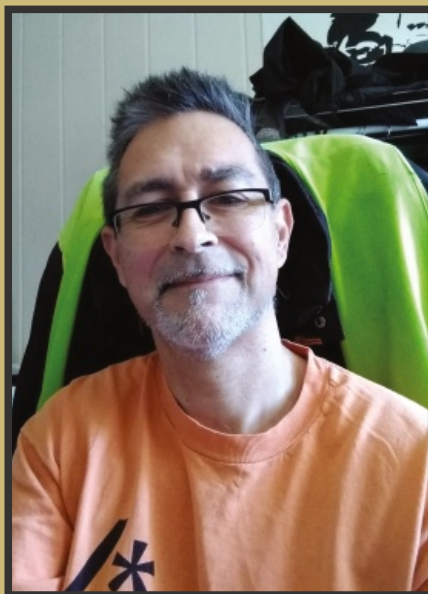
TrueSpace on an Amiga, taking the Amiga and a genlock to the video company where we were doing the edit and playing the titles in live, including the music. And they could not believe what was happening!

Ben

I'd used them all. I had a tiny program called *Create 3D* first. Nobody's ever heard of it and rightly so. I used *Turbo Silver* that became *Imagine*, and also the big daddy in the early days, *Sculpt 3D*. That was my most expensive purchase at the time, costing a bit more than £500 at RRP. In those days, I worked for a company called HB Marketing, who were the biggest distributor of serious Amiga hardware and software. Silica was probably the best-known, but they bought from us. It meant that I didn't pay £500 for *Sculpt*, but it wasn't free!

Yes, my first use of *LightWave 3D* was a pirated version from the Video Toaster on two floppies, one for *Layout*, one for *Modeler*. It wasn't my first 3D package (more on which later), but I instantly liked the way it worked. *Layout*, in particular, was superb.

To start with, the only way you could get to use *LightWave* was either using the dodgy version 2.0 I'd acquired or buy a Video Toaster. That made no sense because it was \$2,000 worth of useless hardware just to get *LightWave* that



Ben Vost

wouldn't run without the Toaster card.

The first semi-legal version of *LightWave* came with *LightRave*. It was a hacked version of *LightWave* that used a dongle to emulate the Toaster. I bought it as soon as I could. NewTek saw that this was happening and unbundled *LightWave* from the Toaster at version 3.0, using first a parallel port, then a USB dongle. Up to this point, people had already seen what *LightWave* could do, because you couldn't escape its use in sci-fi TV - *The X Files*, *SeaQuest DSV*, *Babylon 5* and



The mag that has documented the 3D industry under the careful guidance of Ben.

many other US TV shows used *LightWave* for their effects. Now, finally, you could buy it without either needing to be in an NTSC region for TV or even needing the video hardware at all.

Dan

How much time do you have? [smiles] So, initially I went to college for photojournalism. In my second year, I took a broadcast TV class and then switched my major to broadcast journalism and minored in photojournalism.

My first job out of college was as a ▶



Dan showing us his archviz skills.



Dan Ablan

photojournalist for a small CBS TV station in Indiana. Being from Chicago, I was anxious to get closer to home. My second job was running the local origination TV channel for a cable station as their programme manager. There, I needed to replace our character generator and when talking to my sales rep, he told me about a cool new system called the Video Toaster. It was just what we needed to switch our studio cameras, add over the shoulder graphics, lower thirds, and character generation.

But, the added bonus was *LightWave 3D*. The sales rep called up a 3D apple and hit the render button. I want to say it took about eight minutes to render. We couldn't take our eyes off of it. You have to understand, we all see 3D everywhere we go today - our phones, TV, print, movies... but in 1990, it was almost as if you didn't know what you were looking at. 3D animation was invented in 1976, so in 1990 it was still very much in its infancy. I had seen some experimental shorts from a company out of California - Pixar. With that Apple render, I was hooked.

A couple of years later, then working as a corporate video producer, I saved up enough cash to get my own Amiga and *LightWave 3D* system. I started creating logos for local businesses and anyone else who was interested! In 1994, I left the 9 to 5 and started my own animation business back in Chicago.

Kevin

1983. *Popular Science Magazine* had a cover featuring the Golden Gate Bridge. It looked... not photoreal, but not drawn. What was it? I flipped through the issue. Quickly I learned computers could do more than play video games or balance your cheque book. They could draw for you. This was a big revelation for me. This is what drove me to find how to get this at home. It would take much longer than I thought.

The 8-bit micros I had access to simply

could not approach what I was seeing in that magazine. The years went by, and films like *Tron* and *The Last Starfighter* blasted my eyeballs and sent my brain into a creative frenzy. I *needed* to find how to do this!

It wasn't until 1989 that a friend of mine showed me an ad for the A500 in *Amiga Vision* magazine. In that issue, I discovered the Amiga along with a host of "3D Animation" software. This was incredible to me. I, of course, subscribed to the magazine. I never wanted to be without the knowledge of this fast moving new field.

This was the start of a career I'd always wanted. To create and tell visual stories with all the power of a full production. Controlled by... me. Using 3D animation software, I was the writer, director, producer, photographer, and I was in charge of it all!

The Amiga was the only platform I found that had all the software as well as the hardware that could generate the images and animations I was seeing. Doing all this for what was called, "off the shelf prices." You could afford this stuff. This wasn't reserved for big studios or universities. Amiga democratised 3D animation. It was an amazing platform. A computer ahead of its time compared to the clunky DOS PCs of the era, and far more affordable and seemingly more featured than the very expensive Apple offerings.



We all love us some Star Trek, and Kevin does too!

What is it about LightWave that makes it a preferred piece of software for you?

Chris

I like the way that *LightWave* is geared towards film production - with the software split into two packages: *Modeler*, which is used to build objects, and *Layout*, in which scenes are constructed, animated and rendered using objects, lights and cameras. *LightWave Modeler* also has a well deserved reputation for being fast and powerful. In particular, the interface makes the rapid, accurate manipulation of points and polygons more fluid than in many other packages. For some time now, I've been learning *Blender*, which has some powerful tools. But *LightWave Modeler* beats it hands down when it comes to the interface and modelling speed.

Do I stick with *LightWave* because it's what I know? Well, anybody who has spent decades learning and using a particular 3D package has a lot of time invested in it, and reaping as much payback from that as possible makes sense. But there's more to it than that.

Firstly, over the decades you build up a lot of 3D assets, and this massive back catalogue of models and scenes comes in very handy when I need to produce 3D shots for my videos in a very restricted frame of time.

Secondly, there is cost and licensing. Aside from *Blender*, moving to another 3D package is not cheap, and today, pretty much all alternatives are offered on a rental basis. So *LightWave* remaining a perpetual licence purchase for a reasonable update price has been a large part of me staying with the software.

Ben

I tried them all! *Real 3D* was just weird.



Kevin Quattro,
illustration style

It used "Reverse Polish Notation" for its maths and the render wasn't great. I used *Imagine* before I got *LightWave* and I reckon it was the best Amiga 3D package to that point. Actually, having said I tried them all, *Caligari* means nothing to me... I actually even used *Videoscape* - that was the forerunner to *LightWave's Layout*.

LightWave 6 was the first 3D application anywhere that supported HDR imagery, both for textures and also for the renderer's output. At the time, *Maya* still cost £6,000 and needed a very high-end machine. It didn't have that. *Maya* still rendered in 24-bit colour and 8-bit alpha while *LightWave* was rendered in a floating-point colour space. It meant there was a richness and warmth that came straight out of the pipe without post-production.

Dan

When I started, there was *LightWave*, and a program called *Wavefront* (I think). *Wavefront* needed a Silicon Graphics machine and much more render (and brain) power than I had. Added, it was \$20,000 a year to get set up. *LightWave* on the other hand was bundled with the Video Toaster and that, along with the Amiga, topped out around \$5,000. Beyond that, I really gravitated to *LightWave* because my photo/video background worked in my favour. I quickly picked up the lighting, cameras, and scene setup. Modelling took me some time, but regardless, I just "got it" and was all in.

Kevin

In the early years, I didn't have *LightWave*. *LightWave* was something that was "coming soon". Part of some weird new funky piece of hardware called the Video Toaster. It was going to be expensive. This had me searching for what was available at the moment.

My first 3D software was *Imagine 2.0*. It was a chore to learn. I started with modelling 3D objects. Which is funny, considering years later, modelling is the last thing I ever want to do. I didn't learn how to animate in *Imagine* until very late. Even then I found it tedious and never fully developed my skills in it.

I did check out other software: *Caligari*, *Real 3D*, *Animation Master*, *Sculpt 4D*. It became very obvious, extremely quickly, that the *LightWave* software, as part of the Video Toaster, was the best fit for my desires. It was the one piece of software that operated much like you'd expect in real life. Setting up lights, cameras, animating objects. All in an extremely intuitive way. Simple mouse and keyboard controls. No convoluted

multi-step processes. Move, rotate, keyframe the camera or item, and move on. On top of that, it had an amazing assortment of built-in features and effects that allowed you to output a truly complete animation from the program. Nothing else needed.

LightWave helped usher in the entire "golden era" of television computer generated visual effects. If not for *LightWave*, the transition of television visual effects to CGI would have happened much later. I really believe that. It was cheap, effective, powerful and easy to learn. Fledgling studios flocked to it, gobbling up anyone with even the most basic knowledge for it.

Decades of award-winning content were produced using *LightWave*. This carried on well into the late 2010s. After all this time, *LightWave's* "light" has dimmed. I must admit this. Its future in question? It's no longer the powerhouse go-to tool it once was for television, and even film. It's also not gone, just yet. There are still studios and individuals out there enjoying the super simple, super powerful *LightWave* 3D software. A foundation built upon an early era of focused creative computers like the Amiga. Amiga is in its soul. This artist will continue on with it at my side for some time to come.

Sitting around the campfire

I always find it interesting looking at the human stories that surround our technical passions. If I show some of my friends or family members a box of *LightWave*, *ImageFX* or *Deluxe Paint*, they generally see an old tattered box with smelly paper and mouldy discs, after which they look up at me with more than a little concern in their eyes.

I see tools that allow stories of creativity and personal expression to happen. By using these tools, they give us tales of human endeavour, overcoming challenges both technical and artistic. Lastly, these tools were crafted by a special set of magicians who allowed all of this to happen.

So when we get to hear some of this folklore, it reminds me that these boxes, manuals and disks are a portal into something truly remarkable. Thanks to Chris, Dan, Kevin and Ben for your time and allowing us a peek into your respective pasts.



GOLD STANDARD



Matthew Smith is on a mission from God (well, from the editor, but close enough) to seek out the grooviest Amiga games within each genre and place them centre stage for everybody to love. Tonight we've got another Wild Card special for you, so put your hands together and go nuts for the format's most fabulous film licence!

Game	Released	Authors	Publisher
The Blues Brothers	1991	Vincent Berthelot and Jean-Michel Masson (programming and design); Stephane Beaufils (graphics); Christophe Fevre (music); Eric Caen (production)	Titus Software

Just as movies based on video games are generally deemed to be rubbish (a premise that I've been examining in the pages of *Amiga Addict's* sister publication, *Pixel Addict*, via my regular Pixels 'n' Popcorn column), so too are video games based on movies. And with good reason: film licences number among the most heinous gaming atrocities ever perpetrated by human beings, especially where the Amiga is concerned.

Typically rushed into production to cash in on the presumed box office success of a major motion picture, your standard Amiga movie licence would fall into the trap of trying to recreate key scenes from the relevant film in the form of several short, unsatisfying sub-games. The end result was invariably a disjointed, funless mess that left you feeling extremely hard done by if you'd just blown 25 quid on the wretched thing.

There were, happily, departures from this unwinning formula. Some film licences landed in the hands of people who understood that the crucial thing was to get the design right first and worry about evoking the movie's atmosphere later. Thus we ended up with the jolly *Mario*-esque platform antics of *The Addams Family*, the tense polygonal 3D shoot 'em up thrills of *Robocop 3*, and the famously

Amiga-selling 1989 *Batman* game, which effectively blended platforming superheroics with cool-looking 3D driving sequences.

And then there was *The Blues Brothers*. Published in late 1991, more than a decade after the film came out, the game seems at first glance to have little in common with its source material. It doesn't follow the movie's plot. It doesn't include digitised images from Jake and Elwood's big-screen adventure. Heck, it doesn't even feature the faces of Jim Belushi and Dan Aykroyd as the titular heroes, presenting us instead with cartoony caricatures of the pair. It doesn't do anything revolutionary in terms of graphics, sound or gameplay, and it's not that big, consisting of just six levels.

What it *does* do is capture the film's madcap, comedic spirit to a tee, by means of a gleefully entertaining platform romp that would enhance any game collection most handsomely. In short: it rocks, man.

Sweet Home Chicago

Directed by John Landis and released in 1980, the movie revolves around the eponymous musicians causing humorous havoc as they careen around Chicago trying to reform their band so they can raise money to save an orphanage. The

game, meanwhile, has a rather more simple storyline. The town sheriff, having learned of the brothers' plans to hold another raucous concert, has had their equipment stolen in a dastardly ploy to stop the show from going ahead. Jake and Elwood must therefore run and jump their way around five hazardous locations hunting for their missing gear and evading the sheriff's goons before finally heading for the concert hall.

Prior to 1991, Titus Software had an unenviable reputation for cranking out dreck. *The Blues Brothers* marked the start of a (sadly brief) run of top-notchitude for the company, which also saw the release of 1992's *Titus The Fox* (another lively platformer very much in the same vein as *The Blues Brothers*) and *Crazy Cars 3*, the Amiga's all-time greatest sprite-based racing game (see my Gold Standard column way back in Issue 6 for more info on that one).

A glance at the accompanying screenshots will reveal that this game has something of the look of a NES platformer, which may cause understandable alarm considering how terrible most NES ports to the Amiga were. (*Castlevania*, anyone? *Battletoads*? *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles*? Gah.) Delightfully, however, it also *plays* like a



If you manage to keep your umbrella to the end of level one, you'll be rewarded with a whole load of bonus records which you can float down and collect at your leisure. Grabbing 100 of them awards you an extra energy heart, but beware the broken discs; they'll deduct records from your total.



Seconds away from collecting the missing piece of musical equipment on level two – the microphone. The status bar at the top of the screen shows that we've already recovered the guitar; just the amplifier, the promotional poster and the concert permit to go.



NES platformer – one that's simple in concept and gleamingly polished in execution, with tons of neat ideas to keep you engaged. Think *Super Mario Bros* and *DuckTales*.

So, what specifically makes *The Blues Brothers* so brilliant?

Groove Me

Let's start with the music. The film is renowned for its first-class soundtrack, crammed as it is with classic blues, soul and rock 'n' roll numbers, so you might reasonably expect the tie-in game to be sonically spiffy. And you know what? It jolly well is! It features spirited chiptune renditions of four tracks plucked from both the movie and the first Blues Brothers album (entitled "Briefcase Full Of Blues", released in 1978 when Belushi and Aykroyd were performing musical skits as Jake and Elwood Blues on Saturday Night Live), namely the "Peter Gunn Theme", "Everybody Needs Somebody To Love", "Shot Gun Blues" and "(I Got Everything I Need) Almost". They're proper toe-tappers and, alongside the slapstick sound effects, they add hugely to the cheerful, freewheeling energy of the whole enterprise.

The Old Landmark

Next we have the level designs, which are vastly more varied and imaginative than your standard platform fare. The settings include a shopping mall, a chemical factory, a prison, a sewage works and a building site; all fittingly grounded in reality, and yet offering greater scope for adventuresome hijinks than generic forests and the like. Neatly, the maps are laid out to form coherent structures, so they feel like actual places even with the cartoon visuals, and you can enter any doors you find to access bonus rooms – a vital fact to keep in mind during your hunt for the brothers' missing musical accoutrements. Most importantly, while the levels are fairly compact, they're teeming with obstacles to overcome and bonuses to collect, so there's always a fun new challenge around every corner.



On level three, chain-link fences provide a handy means of evading the prison guards.

Each location offers up unique features to keep things interesting. The mall, for example, has a rooftop garden where you'll find umbrellas to help slow your descent as you hop between tree branches and surprisingly solid clouds. The factory has conveyor belts, crushy machines and a cold room where every surface is encased in slippery ice. The prison is riddled with old escape tunnels full of spike traps and exposed electrical cables, and there are some very strange people inhabiting some of the cells. The sewer sees you swimming through claustrophobic pipes, and the building site consists of two partially-constructed skyscrapers with cranes raising and lowering bits of girder, leading to lots of precarious high-altitude leaping.

The sixth and final level takes place at the concert venue, where the challenge is to find your way onto the stage. It's short and sweet and effectively acts as an extended end sequence, allowing you to revel in your victory. There are still a few pesky villains lurking about the place though, so it pays not to get too cocky.

Flip, Flop & Fly

Speed is another crucial component in *The Blues Brothers'* success; the action moves at an exhilaratingly breathless pace, and the smooth scrolling and unerringly exact controls mean that you only ever have yourself to blame when you slip up. Then there's the game's winning sense of humour, typified by the klutzy manner in which Jake and Elwood move and their mischievous method for doing in the baddies, i.e by lobbing wooden crates at them. A neat risk-reward mechanic comes into play here: Jake and Elwood can't swim or crawl while carrying a crate above their heads, and they can't jump as high as normal either, so if you want to transport a box long-distance to deal with a particularly troublesome enemy, you may have to think extra carefully about how you're going to make the journey.

Oh, and let's not forget the simultaneous two-player mode, which is pretty chaotic since the scrolling only follows one of the characters, but it's a right laugh nonetheless.

As both a movie and a game, *The Blues Brothers* is lightning in a bottle; exactly the right elements just happened to come together in the right place at the right time to result in something strikingly special. I don't know exactly what happened to Titus back in 1991, but when it came to this game... Jesus H. Tap-Dancing Christ, they saw the light! 🌟

Illinois Nasties

Titus had plans to bring a sequel to the Amiga named *The Blues Brothers: Jukebox Adventure*, but its release was cancelled despite reviews appearing in a handful of European magazines in early 1994. The game did, however, come out for the SNES, the Game Boy and MS-DOS machines, and it was completely awful on all of them, so Amiga owners had a lucky escape there. Titus' purple patch had gone a distinctly nifty shade of brown by then.



Indicative of the wrongness of *Jukebox Adventure* (seen here in its MS-DOS incarnation) is the background story, which is that Jake and Elwood have been sucked into a magical jukebox and have to traverse a series of fantasy worlds in order to escape. The first world is a generic forest. Sigh.



Crafting a new Rogue

- James speaks with the guys at Badger Punch about their new roguelike

Here at AA Towers, we've been keenly following the progress of Badger Punch Games' upcoming isometric roguelike title, *Roguecraft*. For those that don't know, a roguelike game is a subgenre of RPGs which features procedurally generated levels, turn-based gameplay, and permanent death.

From the first screenshot of this new game, it seemed like a game we wanted to play, so when we saw that the team behind it were attending the Kickstart show in

Nottingham, we couldn't help but take the opportunity to grab them for a chat.

Hi guys, it's a pleasure to meet you, and thanks for agreeing to sit down with us and talk about your new game *Roguecraft*. Please could you just quickly introduce yourselves to our readers?

Ricki: Hi, my name is Ricki Sickenger, also known as Zendar, from Badger Punch Games. I do the programming.

Henning: Hello, I'm Henning Ludvigsen and I'm the pixel guy, the artist for Badger Punch Games.

Roguecraft is quite an unusual game for the Amiga - there's not that many roguelikes on the platform, with *Rogue*

and *NetHack* being the only two that come to mind immediately. What made you choose that as your genre of choice?

Ricki: Well, the real reason is that we made a pretty popular game for the Commodore 64 called *Rogue64*. We were kind of done with doing C64 stuff for a while and wanted to shift focus over to the Amiga. That's kind of the platform where we got to know each other through the demoscene, so we had a little stint on the C64 and then we wanted to do an Amiga thing. Basically we just wanted to port our game over to Amiga, and then add whatever we could to make it more Amiga-ish!

So if *Roguecraft* came from *Rogue64*. What inspired you to create a roguelike in the first place?

Ricki: Well, *Rogue64* came from another game called *Rogue4K*! That was a game





The blue potion this run destroys all enemies on screen.

jam game from 2021 where you couldn't use any memory over \$1000 hex (which means anything over 4,096 bytes) making it a really hard constraint on the game (Ed. - "The game ended up earning an impressive fourth place overall!").

I was struggling to find anything to do, and I decided maybe I could try something procedural (which a roguelike is). I haven't really played that many roguelikes before, but I was kind of getting into it and I was looking at the contest and thinking, "Alright, I'll try to make a thing where I just generate the levels." That's how we got started as a roguelike.

Henning: There are even some limitations from the original 4K game that made it into *Rogue64* and that we still kept in this game, like the amount of tiles.

Ricki: Yeah, we had a bigger play area originally in the 4K game. Because we were so constrained on memory, I had to start putting code in the screen area - I had to shrink the playfield down to 10x10 to get all the code in. It turned out it worked pretty well actually! So then when that was finished, I wanted to make a game that actually used the resources of the Commodore 64, because a lot of people liked *Rogue4K*, even though it didn't have any ending. You could play it forever, so we want to make a proper roguelike with an endgame.

So with *Roguecraft*, you can tell by the name that you're going with a Lovecraftian kind of theme. How much does that affect the gameplay?

Ricki: I guess it's more to do with how the graphics are and the setting.

Henning: I've worked on quite a few Lovecraft board games through my work and I really love that setting - it's not fantasy, but you still have weird monsters, insanity and stuff like that. I'm a bit fed up with traditional fantasy, so here you can still have tentacles, monsters, dungeons and fairly modern weapons if you want to.

AA: So much like a kind of weird history kind of approach. Is there any madness mechanic or similar or is it mainly the aesthetics?

Ricki: [laughs] Not yet.

Henning: You can get drunk!

Ricki: There is a potion that makes you stronger, but also makes you drunk.



Our fearless hero bravely fights a... chicken.

AA: A bit like in real life, although then you might just think that you are!

Henning: [laughs] Realism!

Have you got various other weapons and equipment?

Ricki: Not at the moment, because right now we only have one character, as we also had in *Rogue64*. We have different potions. There's three different colours - one is green and it's always healing, and then there's blue and red and they are random. We have a set of different things that can happen, and every time the game starts, it'll choose two different things for the two potions. So one might reveal the whole map or it might kill every monster in the room, or it might be that one that will make you drunk. So you don't find out until you start using them in the game.

Henning: So you have to try for each ▶

Badger Punch Games - Henning (left) and Ricki (right) hard at work!





Better grab that health quickly before Gary sees you!



Green potions will always be healing.

game because you don't know. To give some variation.

AA: So it's a risk/reward type thing - you have to drink this to find out what it does and it might not be good?

Ricki: I did actually have one of the early versions of *Rogue64* that had poison as one of the things a potion could be, but it wasn't much fun. You just start losing health points for like five or six rounds, so if you only had like five hit points, you would die after five turns.

Henning: Yeah, if that happens then you had to just reset the game and start again - that's not fun!

Ricki: I did actually put that into the snake enemy in *Rogue64*. There's like a five or ten percent chance that when it bites you, it'll poison you.

We've seen quite a lot of screenshots of *Roguecraft* and it looks really nice, it's got a really lovely graphical style. How did that style come about?

Henning: When we made *Rogue64*, we had these really limited character set

Although simple, you can see the ingredients of *Roguecraft* in the original *Rogue4K*.



visuals. I wanted to go with bitmap art so we could play a bit more with it, but we didn't have time. So now we wanted to do more with the art style. I always loved isometric stuff, so let's just try that - you can make it still work on a proper grid, but by rotating it, you can have more fun with the visuals.

I'm all about the ambience. I love making locations for games and wanted to really see how far I could push the original chipset with 32 colours. So that's basically the reason - I wanted to maximise the screen space and make some nice unique locations.

Ricki: One thing about *Roguecraft* is that we don't actually procedurally generate the rooms. We've already made all the rooms beforehand and based on where that room is in the map and what exits are in the room, we choose the correct room that will fit in there.

AA: So you are procedurally generating the order of those rooms?

Ricki: Yeah, because we're making a level consisting of rooms and then when we connect up every room that would fit that type of connection. So, if it's like an east-west connection, you might get a hallway and stuff like that.

So in terms of features in the game, what's the most interesting part? What is the bit you're most proud of?

Ricki: That's a good question, the game isn't quite finished yet of course, but I do like the way

we get the rooms to work in the randomly generated level, because it kind of looks and seems like everything fits as it should. You go into a level, there's an exit on the other side, there's a hallway there - it feels connected.

The game is set to release for Amiga 500 and up with 1MB RAM. What made you choose that as your target system?

Ricki: For my part, it's because that's what I had when I was younger. I want to target the machine I had, because I still have that machine. So being able to put my game on my old machine has been a dream.

Henning: I also like having some limitations, and also the further back you go, the more people can play the game. So it's kind of a win-win thing.

Speaking about release, how far off do you think you are before the game comes out?

Ricki: I've been saying October. I was saying May, until May came. [laughs]

AA: I guess that's a problem when you're doing an indie kind of game - you're not working on it full time, so you can't set the timescales. It's whenever you've got time free to work on it?

Ricki: Yes, basically it's a passion project, but it has to fit in with the rest of my life



as well. We're not doing this for the money.

Henning: And we wouldn't just release it to hit the date either - we wouldn't be happy with that.

Ricki: But we're not going to be endlessly tweaking it though, at some point we're gonna set a date. But right now, we still don't have quite a few of the big features we want in there, so we're hoping for October, but I think it will be December.

Is there a specific big feature you're missing at the moment that you're really wanting to make sure gets in there?

Ricki: Yes, with *Rogue64* you play one character and there's no difficulty setting in the game, so for *Roguecraft* we're actually gonna give you a choice of three different characters and they all have a different difficulty level. So a different class effectively represents a difficulty level.

Henning: You will play the games three slightly different ways.



Ricki: We will have a warrior and a rogue and the wizard. Traditional! But it gives you different options, and it gives you different difficulties with varying hit points and attack points and stuff.

AA: Will there be any ranged combat or spells?

Ricki: That's what we're hoping to put in for the Wizard. You need spells, so that might prolong the development a little bit! [laughs]

Obviously you're still working on this game. Once it's complete, are you intending to move on and do more Amiga games in the future?

Ricki: I want to do more Amiga stuff, I think you [Henning] want to do more Amiga stuff as well. So we're definitely going to be making another Amiga game, but it might not be right after *Roguecraft*. We have some other stuff in the works that we can't really talk about at the moment.

I think our readers would be interested



Rogue64 was great but as you can see the graphics on the Amiga really got an upgrade!

to know what specific tools you used when creating the game. Can you tell us a little about that?

Ricki: I'll work on a Windows or a Mac machine and use *Visual Studio Code* for coding it and *WinUAE* for the emulation.

Henning: I'm using just a Windows computer and *Photoshop*. I don't remember the name of this person, but I found this technique online - I think called HD index painting - where you use a kind of layer technique in *Photoshop*, so you can use it non-destructively. But you can choose the dither and the colour palette yourself - you can easily upscale it to like 64 colours and it will just magically fix it and it works really well for this purpose. So yeah, I've kind of modified that workflow a little bit.

You're planning a big box release I believe?

Ricki: Yeah, we're planning a big box release. We're going to try and make a nice release like we did with the previous game.

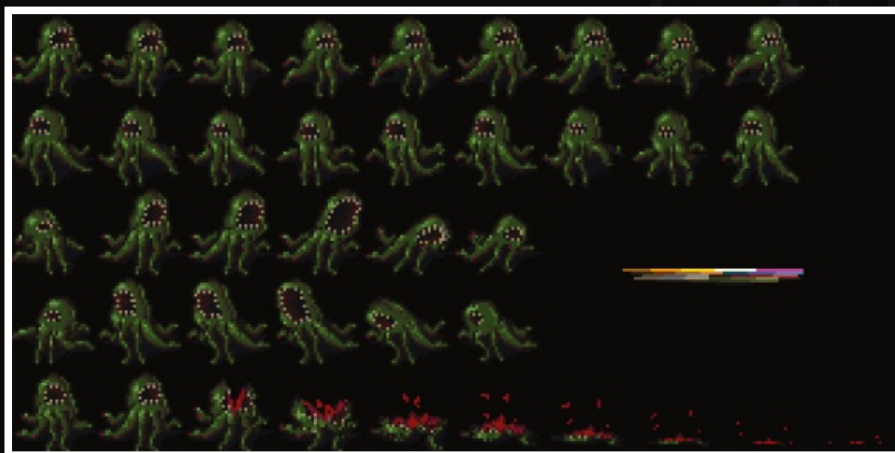
Is there anything else you want our readers to know about the game and

what you're trying to achieve with it?

Ricki: Well, for *Roguecraft* we're not trying to make it like a super hardcore roguelike. We're trying to make a game that people want to play where your play session will probably be like 20 to 25 minutes, because we want people to be able to sit down, play the game and hopefully, if they complete it, they completed within a play session. So it's kind of a casual roguelike if you will. 🍷

Thanks again to Ricki and Henning for agreeing to sit down and chat with us. It was great to meet them face to face, let's hope that things continue to go smoothly with the development and we see the game launch this year as planned. Of course, as soon as we're able to, we'll bring you a full review - from what we've seen at the moment, and from quickly playing an unfinished build, it's set to be a corker! If you want to check out a work in progress version of the game yourself, it has been entered in the latest AmiGameJam (<https://itch.io/jam/amigamejam>) and is available to download now.

The spritesheet for one of the many enemies.



Alien Breed II: The Horror Continues

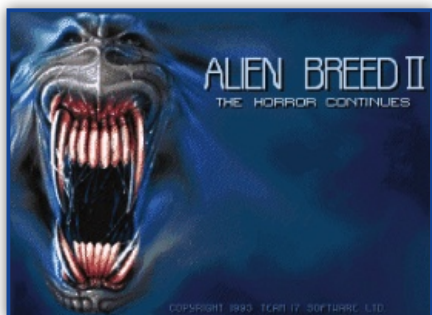


by Alan Grapes

- Will you make it to the deck lift in time?

Developer: Team17

Released: 1993



The original *Alien Breed*, released in 1991, is a great game. It is a top-down atmospheric and claustrophobic shooter, influenced by the 1979 Ridley Scott film *Alien* and more so by James Cameron's 1986 sequel, *Aliens*. The 1992 *Special Edition* release of the game is better still, with double the number of levels and the removal of some minor bugs that were present in the original version. So in producing *Alien Breed II: The Horror Continues*, Team17 definitely had their work cut out to improve upon a formula that was already hugely popular and successful.

Bigger is better?

This instalment, released in 1993, did just that. Following the same blueprint as the original game, you play as a space marine, navigating and blasting your way through the mazelike levels of a facility that has been overrun with alien creatures. The game engine used in its predecessor was redesigned to produce smoother scrolling... and was so successful it was also used in Team17's 1993 platform masterpiece, *Superfrog*.

Each level has a mission objective and, once this has been completed, you move to the next level via the deck-lift - provided you reach it in time. Completion

of the objective triggers an alarm; the screen starts flashing red and a computer voice commences an auto-destruct countdown. Played in a darkened room, this is hugely atmospheric and the panic that strikes you as you race against the countdown timer is quite disconcerting! If you fail to make it to the deck-lift in time, it is game over.

The top-down view of the first game has been retained, as have the computer terminals, which you will find conveniently dotted around the levels. By logging in, you can purchase first aid kits, door keys, extra lives, new and upgraded weapons, and a map scanner - all by using collectable credits that the previous inhabitants have carelessly left lying around.

Choices, choices, choices

This is the only game in the *Alien Breed* series that offers the player with a choice of four playable characters, each of whom starts with different equipment, which is a nice touch. The selection of weapons is good too, ranging from the standard (and fairly ineffective) machine gun with which most characters start, to more powerful options such as those with multi-fire, homing missiles, bouncing shots, grenade launchers and ammo guzzling flamethrowers.

There are three levels of every weapon, each costing more than the last, often leaving a player in a quandary: "Do I buy now or battle on a little longer and save

up for a more powerful version?" This is a smart way of adding real strategic decisions to the game and it works well. You retain each weapon that you buy and each player can cycle through all those they own by pressing one of the Alt keys.

Your character has a health bar and can take quite a few hits before a life is lost, and this can be replenished by collecting one of the first aid kits that are dotted about, or by buying a top-up from a computer terminal. This is just as well, as the aliens come at you thick and fast (with far more on screen than in the first game) and the only way to navigate some sections is to bite the bullet and take a few hits.

Frame it and hang it in a gallery...

While retaining the bones of the original game; there is no disputing that *Alien Breed II: The Horror Continues* is bigger and, for the most part, better. There are 17 large levels to negotiate, compared



Once you have homing missiles, your progress becomes easier.



The loading screens are gorgeous.



The horrible first level. Another arbitrary helicopter death beckons...



You'll meet a greater variety of alien as you work your way through.

with just six in the original *Alien Breed* and 12 in *Alien Breed Special Edition 1992*. As you would expect from a Team17 game, everything is very slick and it looks beautiful - the loading screens in particular deserving mention as being works of art.

The mazelike levels are nicely constructed, being complicated enough to ensure that it takes a number of plays before they start to feel familiar. There is a greater variety of aliens than the first games too, with each type moving differently.

As for the sound - Allister Brimble is now renowned as an audio genius in the gaming world and the atmosphere he creates with great music and terrific sound effects helps reinforce a genuine feeling of tension and foreboding.

Two's company

As a two-player game, *Alien Breed II* works well, with both players playing the same level simultaneously. There are no additional credits to collect, so each player can only level up their gun at half the speed of the single-player game. On the flip-side however, you have two guns to take on the aliens and this evens things out nicely.

A high degree of communication and cooperation is needed; otherwise a player can easily become trapped by a wall at the side of a screen and attacked by aliens they didn't know were there. This



Seriously - give the artist an award...

isn't a game you can rush through - if you try, you will quickly be overwhelmed. The best strategy, certainly early on, is to pick your way through each stage carefully, preserving your health.

But it's not all good

There are a couple of negatives that I should report. Firstly, the difficulty curve is somewhat uneven. The first level (which, strangely, is set outside and stands alone compared with all the others) is particularly difficult, especially for a new player. Rather than battling aliens, you have to avoid meteorites (which diminish your health) and security helicopters (any contact results in instant death). There is a very fine line between *difficult* and *stupidly unfair*, and the first level embraces this line and takes it dancing. There is no hand-holding here - you either wise up, or die... extremely quickly.

This does perplex me. There is no getting around it; it is a fairly unpleasant way to start the game. Even experienced players will find it tricky to navigate this level without losing at least one life. The second level is also pretty tough and then - perhaps because you will have collected sufficient credits to upgrade your gun - things get a little easier.

The other irritating feature is that the aliens respawn continuously, making it impossible to clear out an area. You never see this - it always happens off-screen, but you can kill every alien in view, move away and return ten seconds later to find the room is chock full of aliens again. This is frustrating, and makes some missions significantly harder.

Verdict

However, those niggles aside, this is a great update on the *Alien Breed* series, and an excellent addition to any collection. I have always been a huge fan of Team17's Amiga catalogue and (if we ignore the bizarre first level) this



When the screen looks like this, it's time for your blood pressure meds...



The swimming pool. No running, ducking, bombing, smoking or homing missiles...

certainly carries the quality that you would expect from one of their titles.

It looks and sounds terrific with solid gameplay, allowing the player to venture a little further with each incursion, providing that perfect "I'll just have one more go" incentive. It provides great value too, as it can be replayed many times before becoming predictable.

Definitely worth a look - without the first level, the score would have been several percent higher.



GRAPHICS 85%

I don't think I've ever played a Team17 game that didn't look fantastic - this is no exception. And the AGA version looks even better.



SOUND 88%

The game is atmospheric and genuinely unnerving when the alarms sound and you have to race for the deck-lift.



GRAB FACTOR 80%

Easy to pick up and play, but blighted by an unnecessarily difficult start to the game.



PLAYABILITY 88%

A great top-down shooter with loads of (predominantly!) well designed levels, a great selection of guns and tons of replay value.



85%

Gunship 2000

- Don your flight suit and "Get to da choppa!"

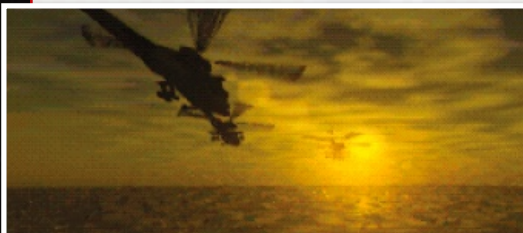
Publisher: Microprose
Developer: MPS Labs
Year: 1994

The main feature of this issue's AA is all about 3D rendering. So, I thought I'd pick out a CD32 game that has rendering and 3D in it. Tenuous link? Maybe. But what the heck. Let's check out *Gunship 2000*.

Before I start, I have an admission to make. I don't like flying. I'll do it, but I don't like it. I particularly don't like flying when I'm being shot at. I don't think that's a particularly unreasonable dislike, do you? However, in *Gunship 2000* I'm equipped with, amongst other things, missiles and a cannon. Let's see if being armed to the teeth can help get me over my fear.

Opening volley

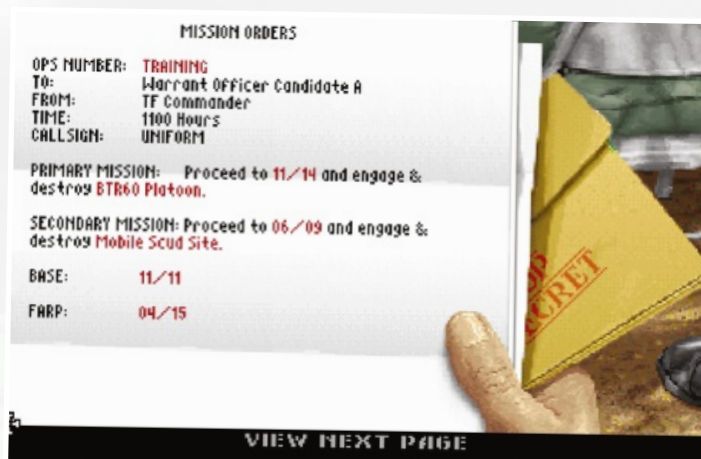
The game starts with a nice little pre-



CDXL intro - nice and atmospheric.



The intro even shows views from the cockpit.



This notice will self destruct after... oh, sorry, that's a different game!

rendered CDXL intro. Helicopters fly through a canyon shooting at a baddie, who explodes in a shower of fire. It's short and grainy, but typical of the time. And it would have been fun to show your mates back in 1994. "Look what my new CD-based console can do!"

Upon entering the game, you have a little journey to complete before you are allowed to step into the cockpit of your fearsome fighting machine. You start in the flight offices, and as a new pilot (Warrant Officer Candidate - WOC), you need to get your name up on the duty roster pinned on the back wall. Here you can also select your insignia and assign a squadron nickname if you wish. It's all a bit of fun and is part of the experience.

Next up you need to go and choose your flight type. Today I will be trying out the training mission, selected by visiting the duty officer's desk. The duty officer has a neat haircut and will studiously ignore you while scribbling in his notepad. Fortunately, neither he nor his notepad are needed. Just grab your training papers out of his in-tray, have a read and continue.

Under orders

You then click on the map on the right-hand wall and select your "Theatre of Duty". In the training mode, you have the option of the Persian Gulf and Central Europe. It's 1994 and Saddam had already been defeated three years previously, so I figured the Gulf option would be fairly safe with him out the way, for the moment at least.

I walk out the door and receive my orders - "Proceed to 11/14 and engage and destroy BTR60 Platoon and then head off to 06/09 and destroy the Mobile Scud site". Having navigated the options



screen which allows you to choose enemy difficulty etc., I am finally placed in control of the AH64-A Apache Gunship. In a... 3D... world. OK, that's enough linking to this month's theme.

Collective confusion

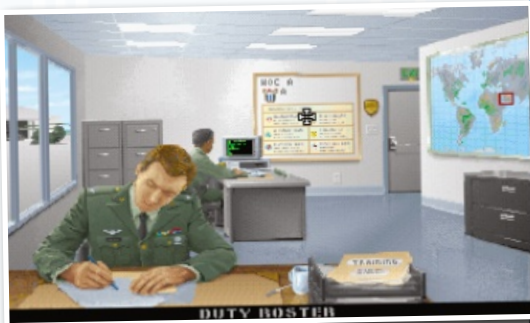
My initial fear of flying started more as an expression of puzzlement as it took me 10 minutes to work out just how to get the whirlybird off the ground. Fortunately, in a flagrant breach of Army regulations (probably), you can shoot while on the helipad. And the first two targets on my mission were in range. Two carefully aimed missiles later and BOOM! Hangars destroyed.

Next - to get off the ground. After much button mashing, I finally admit defeat and consult the manual. Please don't judge me. To lift off, I had to press the D-pad up and press the green button to engage the rotor, which resulted in a moderately convincing helicopter "chopper" sound. Pressing the D-pad up and pressing the yellow button repeatedly lifts you off the ground, and once you're up and hovering about, a voice will tell you where to go, while a handy targeting system will show you what to shoot at.

You can cycle through weapons by pressing the yellow button and blow your targets to kingdom come. Once you've found the obvious targets for



The head up display shows your target.



Setting everything up.

your primary mission, it's time to delve into the manual yet again and find out what to do next. Fire up the map. You can choose to have your chopper fly to the next target by selecting it on the map and pressing the red button followed by the blue button. There are so many different commands and options, you'll be looking at the manual often.

Flight of fancy

Now – it's important to note that you will not be flying around at *Airwolf* style speeds. You'll be cruising along the 3D landscape at a perfectly acceptable framerate (on an 030 equipped CD32, at least), but it won't feel especially fast. This is probably a good thing, as it's all too easy to over-fly your targets and have to bank round and try again.

Once the training is done, you are promoted to Warrant Officer (W01) and you take on a variety of single helicopter missions. Success promotes you to Commissioned Officer and the Flight and Campaign missions. In those missions you are given command of five helicopters. You fly one, and command the others. Success or failure opens the hangar door to the campaign mission, where you are really thrown in at the deep end.

A safe landing

The short version is that I have a new admiration for helicopter pilots. Just getting the darn thing off the ground is



Plenty of instruments to keep your eye on.

hard enough and there are a fiendish number of controls to get your head round. I can only imagine what it is like in real life with a myriad of buttons, switches and dials in front of you. Not to mention the foot pedals. Controlling all that while the enemy is taking pot shots at you is definitely not for the faint-hearted.

Gunship 2000 however – you need to remember that this is a *simulator*. It's not a pick-up and play and fly around arcade shooter. It's a full-on experience that you are going to need to invest time in. The controls are not easy. And there's a manual. A big one. A blokey "I don't need no manual" attitude will quickly collide with reality. There's 49 pages of instructions that it's best to have a read of at least the first half before you get properly involved in the game. It's a darn good game, just don't expect to complete it in an evening!

I didn't have too much time to play much beyond the training mission and there is far more to the game than I have space to detail here, but I have to say I had a lot of fun tootling round the landscape and blowing things up. The detail is good



But there isn't a blue button...? Wait, I get it!

(for the time), there are nice touches like a CD soundtrack and sampled speech. And it's always nice to have that little video intro – FMV was very much a thing in the 90s when developers were working out what to do with all that new CD space! 

Critical Reception

The One Amiga.....91%
Amiga Joker.....85%
Amiga Computing.....77%
CU Amiga.....82%
Amiga Power.....91%
Amiga Format.....92%
Amiga CD32 Gamer..94%



Boom!



Airfield with targets highlighted.

Six Of The Best

- Keir Fraser (FlashFloppy)

Each issue we'll be catching up with a notable figure in the world of Amiga and retro gaming, and asking them to whittle down their list of favourite games to a shortlist of just six. This issue, we're speaking to Keir Fraser, the man behind the *FlashFloppy* firmware we all use in our beloved Gotek drives...

Hi Keir, can you tell us a bit about your history with the Amiga?

I had a ZX Spectrum as my first computer, but I can remember seeing magazine adverts for the Amiga in the late 80s and being awed by the amazing screenshots. I begged for one and like many, my first Amiga was the rather popular *Batman Pack* of Christmas '89. The bundled games loaded so fast, and they were an audiovisual extravaganza compared with my dowdy old Spectrum.

Rather than gaming, I actually spent most of my time hacking on the Amiga: in *AmigaBASIC*, and then assembly language. I really cut my teeth on low-level programming on the Amiga, and it is largely responsible for my career in operating systems and hypervisors.

How did Amiga inspire FlashFloppy?

Of all the weird and wonderful aspects of the Amiga hardware, the one which strangely interested me most was the floppy drive! It raised a host of questions: how did games pack so much onto a disk, accessing the data in a way impenetrable to Workbench, and how did they protect themselves from copying? This inevitably led me down the path of small-scale hacking and cracking of my collection of original games.

On my return to Amiga around 2010 or so, I got into Amiga repairs and soon realised that the mechanical drives and their media are a weak point for preservation. My interest in floppy disks had not waned, and soon I was considering how to replace the unreliable mechanical drives with solid state.

What are you currently working on?

Although I do have some further plans for *FlashFloppy*, most of my retro programming time these days is spent on Greaseweazle, which is my universal USB device for accessing floppy disks for a wide range of retro systems. I've sold well over 6000 Greaseweazle boards, and a vibrant community has grown around preserving and repairing old disks.



Two-player Lemmings can be absolutely brutal!

Thanks to Rob Smith, you can even use Greaseweazle to access real original disks in *WinUAE* and *Amiberry*! Future plans for Greaseweazle include an integrated GUI and better installation packaging for Windows, Mac and Linux. There's also a hardware revision with a USB-C connector in the works. Oh, and better documentation!

Wow, I didn't realise there was so much going on in the world of floppy emulation! But anyway, your list:

Batman: The Movie

Where to start? The very first game I loaded on my shiny new Amiga 500 that Christmas Day, and it blew me away! Although Ocean could be accused of some cynical licence tie-ins at times, *Batman* is a great example of a simple

"game of the movie" formula executed very well indeed.

Two neat platform levels bookend Batmobile and Batwing outings, with a throwaway *Mastermind* puzzle in the middle. Great graphics throughout, especially the Batmobile section which really stunned me back in the day. No one section outstays its welcome or is ridiculously hard: so even I was able to complete it!

Lemmings

As soon as I played the demo on an *Amiga Format* coverdisk, I knew that *Lemmings* was going to be an amazing and unique game, and I had to buy it on release day! Cue the next few weeks carefully plotting my way through the more fiendish levels. The difficulty curve



The Batmobile sections were impressive back in the day.



Sensible's early RTS covers technology from the stone age right up to nukes.



Z-Out is tricky, but in how many games do you get to fight a giant shell?

is firm but fair in the original game - though to be honest, the mayhem levels largely defeated me at the time.

Lemmings also has a really mean two-player mode where the most fun was to be had by sabotaging my little brother's lemmings and sending them to their doom. Yes, I did make him cry!

Mega Lo Mania

Another game I discovered on a coverdisk - and was so bowled over by that I actually went out and bought it - was *Mega Lo Mania*. Apparently the first RTS game with a technology tree, this is another beautifully thought out and play-tuned game from the Sensible team. It's also memorable for the speech samples by proper voice actors, which lighten the mood. Since there are 10 epochs to play through, the many islands have variety and the game doesn't get dull. I played this one constantly for weeks until I beat it.

Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge

Amiga saw the birth of the golden age of point-and-click adventures, and *Monkey Island 2* was a revelation to me

on its release. I spent ages working out the puzzles on Scabb Island, and clearly remember finally getting a boat and discovering a much larger and more exciting map with multiple islands to explore.

Bigger and better than the original *Monkey Island*, it pushed the concept of interactive storytelling to new heights. Beautiful scanned art, movie-style cutscenes, the novel iMUSE sound system... And in an age of rock hard games, it was also a nice change to play a game in which you cannot die!

Z-Out

The Amiga had quite a range of quality shoot 'em ups, and it would be remiss not to include one here. It's unlikely to be top of most people's lists, but I played *Z-Out* endlessly, hooked partly by the more approachable difficulty level than certain other Amiga shooters. Looking back, it's an obvious *R-Type* clone, though I didn't know that at the time. But it does everything so well: beautiful graphics

on every level, fluid gameplay, big bosses, fair collision detection, and cool power-ups. It's just a super fun game to play!

Action Replay III

So this one's a cheat because it's not a game, but I spent a disproportionate amount of time hacking on my Amiga rather than playing games. I learned everything I knew (which is also a lot of what I know now) by looking at the other people's code, and the Action Replay cartridges made this oh so simple by allowing me to freeze any game and then go digging around the machine code!

It also made it a hell of a lot easier to crack and train games, so I learned a few more things about copy protections and custom disk formats from my time with Action Replay. Very useful when developing *FlashFloppy* and my other retro floppy projects many years later!

Thanks for your time Keir, and thanks for all your work making our Amigas load anything we like!

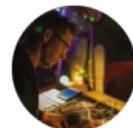


Toupee or not toupee, asks our man Guybrush.



© The Big Book of Amiga Hardware

This little cart had a huge impact on gaming on multiple platforms.



This issue is all over the place, By which I mean we're popping into three different demo parties on the hunt for brand new delights to aggravate your custom chips with! First we have a seaside stop in Budleigh (UK) for Nova. Then we're jetting off to Cordoba (Spain) for some crack intro goodness at Posadas. Lastly we're finishing up in Kvidinge (Sweden) for Pågådata. Pack your bags and let's go!

D-Funk (OCS)

Desire

www.demoo.org/productions/325466

The key to a good demo is coherence, and *D-Funk* is glued together tighter than a LEGO set built by someone in their late forties. Steffest, the person in-charge of this one, obviously had a clear vision to execute - cool and funky - and that is exactly what this delivers. This 64KB demo struts along with solid confidence, with each scene combining good effects framed by fitting artwork and colour schemes. My favourite scene



is the greetings part where a slick looking dude walks down the street while the groups are displayed in neon signs above.

The only thing which seemed a little out of place was the C2P (Chunky to Planar) tunnel, but judging by the comments I've read from Gigabates, the coder of this demo, there weren't enough cycles to squeeze anything else on screen. Wrap the whole thing in a funky chip tune from mAZE and you've got yourself a compo winner.



AMIGASStore Cracktro

Batman Group

www.demoo.org/productions/325648



Posadas

The Terra Cresta Cracktro (OCS)

Spreadpoint and Swiss Cracking Association

www.demoo.org/productions/325649



Spreadpoint have been making some really interesting productions in recent months, throwing out the rule book and carving out their own style. *The Terra Cresta Cracktro* is no exception, as it does away with all the normal cracktro trappings, opting for an 80s mainframe aesthetic which is almost Tron like.

Everything is vector based and Depeche has done an outstanding job with all the vector work, most notably the exploding logos. Rather than more traditional pixel art, Psy and Saturnus The Invincible provide point data instead, allowing the demo to morph these any way it wishes and all at full frame rate. Personally I wasn't so keen on the music from Lord, but it does have a retro feel which fits the demo pretty well.



It's not often we get demos with a backstory, but the latest release from the mighty Batman Group certainly has one. Back in 2009, a group called Buomaschinen posted a video on YouTube stating it was an "ultra rare crack intro for *Shadow of the Beast 2*", claiming the video was shot from a 1084s monitor and the ADF was long since gone. While it did look the part, it wasn't fooling anyone and sparked a discussion on the English Amiga Board about whether it was possible to make this on an A500.

14 years later, and the ever talented Rhino has made it a reality. The *AMIGASStore Cracktro* is a faithful recreation of the fake Amiga demo and proves that of course it was possible... if you know what you're doing. While it might seem simple enough at first glance, there are a lot of pixels being pushed at 50Hz. Slap in a retro themed chip tune from DJ Uno and you have the most perfect answer to a fake demo you could ever wish for.

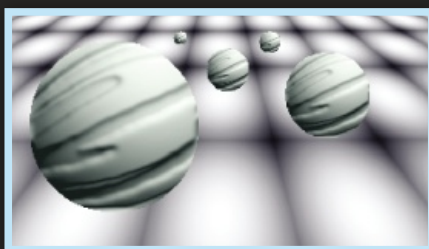
Heavy Cargo (AGA)

Focus Design

www.demoo.org/productions/325654

If you like your design in focus and synchronised, you've come to the right place. The guys at Focus Design are known for their sleek presentation, and I'm happy to say *Heavy Cargo* pushes it up a notch over recent releases.

Firstly, the soundtrack provided by Mygg - if you don't know it then *get* to know it - lays the foundation with a slab of tight techno. The effects coded by Corial and Optima are solid and run at good frame rates, but it's the attention to motion and synchronisation which makes this one sing. Everything moves and pulsates brilliantly to the music, and its almost minimalist approach to some of the visuals really cements it with a futuristic feel. Optic is on hand as ever with some lovely pixel art to round off one of their best releases to date. Love it.



REGULARS

Lubricator Announce

Pågadata

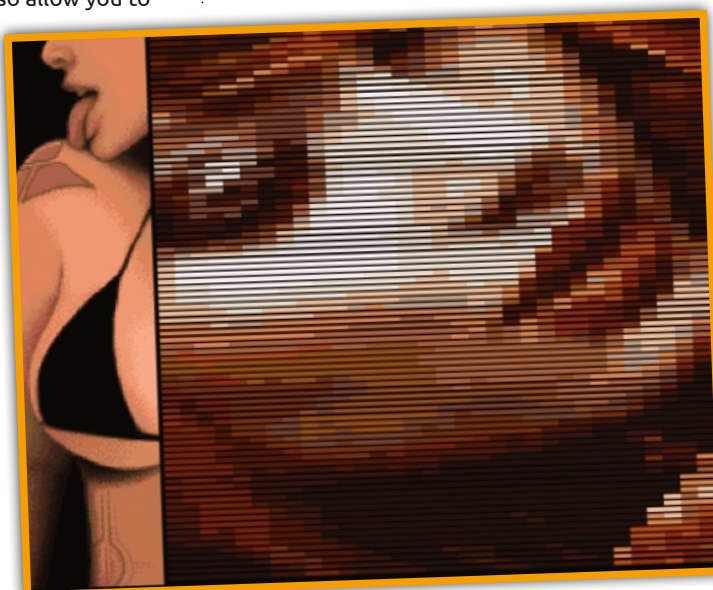
The Electronic Knights

www.demoo.org/productions/325607

The Electronic Knights are back, but I'm

not really here to talk about this demo. *Lubricator Announce* does exactly what it's supposed to do, let you know about a fantastic piece of software. *Lubricator* is an Amiga OS-based bit of kit which will allow your network connected Amiga search and directly download demos from Pouet.net. It will automatically unpack ZIP and LHA files and also allow you to write disk images to floppy (or a Gotek, of course). It can even pull down software from Aminet.

I tested it on stream a while ago and it really is a great piece of kit. I can't wait to try out the latest version. The demo itself is fairly well put together, with code from Okeanos, graphics from Ozan and music from SoDa7 - but why don't you just install *Lubricator* and download the demo direct to your Amiga?



Well that wraps up another fine selection. There are a stack more cracktros from the Posadas party which are worth checking out, so make sure you go and hunt them down. Better still, throw the PCMCIA network card into your Amiga and leech all the files yourself using *Lubricator*. Until next time.



Coding in AMOS

- The first in a series of tutorials to get you started with AMOS by Keith Elcombe



About these tutorials

In these tutorials, we are going to start with the basics - so apologies if you already understand the fundamentals of coding in AMOS. I'd like to bring as many people along for this journey as possible, and starting at the beginning will make the language more accessible to a greater number of people.

As part of all of this, I'd like to add the following statement; please don't be afraid to change the code and try out

different settings or values. I firmly believe that the best way to learn is to break things, push things to their limits, and make them do things they were never meant to do.

None of the code in these tutorials will break your Amiga, and if we ever get to the stage that some code might, it will carry sufficient warnings to try to prevent you from doing anything too drastic!

So after you've mastered the code in each tutorial, go back and change some

values and see what happens.

For example:

If a line of code says to print something at line 10, try changing that 10 to a 20. If a screen is cleared to use the 7th colour out of 16 colours, try changing the 7 to a 3.

If a screen is defined as being 320 pixels wide, change it to 50. Just experiment.

Coding is about having fun! Don't be limited by someone else's imagination.

There's nothing like getting stuck in, so in order to avoid a wordy tutorial, let's get you into the AMOS Pro screen. For the record, I am running AMOS on a real Amiga A1200 with Workbench 3.2.

Upon firing up the application, you should be presented with a splash screen.

going to need to know in order to make your AMOS journey smoother.

Firstly, Left Amiga + A will flip you back to the Workbench screen and leave AMOS running. This is really useful when you need to toggle between other applications and AMOS.

applications on a whim.

Of course when back at Workbench you can hit Left Amiga + M to flip between other applications. Your mileage may vary depending on how much RAM your Amiga has and how many apps you are able to run.

Getting back to AMOS just requires you to hit Left Amiga + A again. Note there may be a slight delay and you'll see a black screen for a moment, but you'll get back to AMOS soon enough.

To run program code in AMOS, hit F1. To check the code for errors before running it, hit F2. To format and justify your code, hit F3.

Out of all of the above, F3 is the most useful. Having clean, tidy, well formatted code is a *must* if you are to become a proficient coder, because having clean and tidy code makes it easier to read and debug when the need arises. And trust me, it will!

Line numbers

If you've done any coding before on a retro system, you're may be familiar with lines of code having numbers. AMOS Pro doesn't use them as a rule - it doesn't prevent you from using them, but instead it will treat them as labels. My advice however is: don't bother. The less typing you need to do the better.

As long as your code is well formatted and with relevant comments, it will be easy enough to read and follow the logic through.

Let's start coding

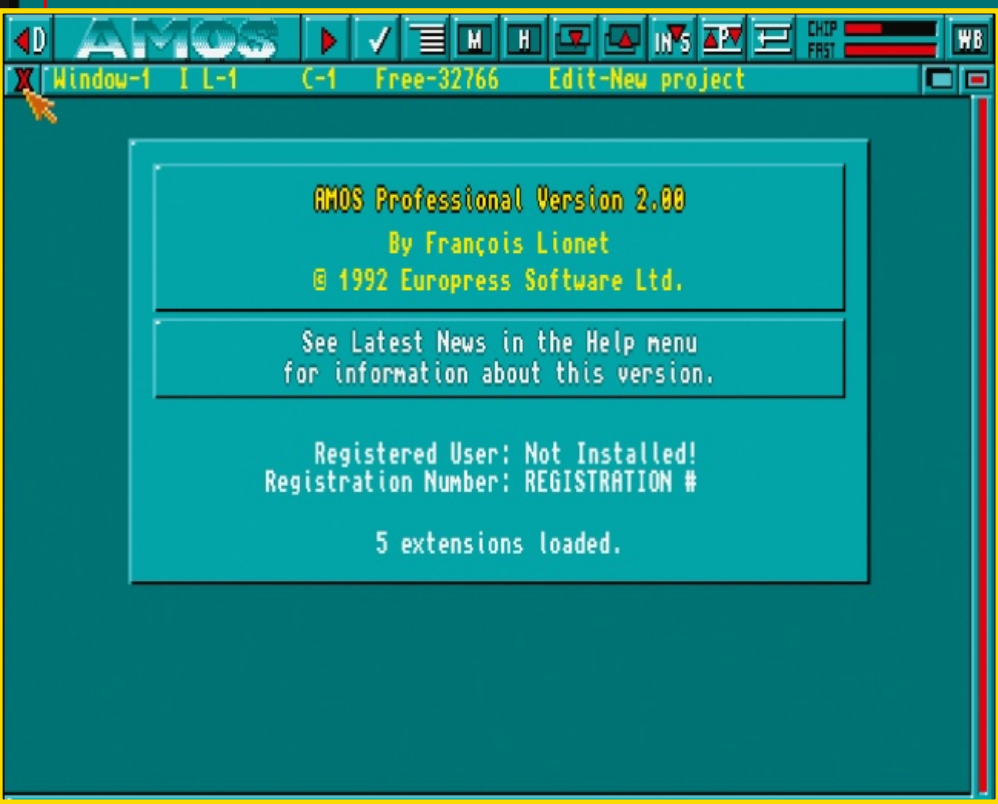
To start off with, we're going to write a

Press Enter to remove the splash screen, and now you are ready to go.

Useful keyboard shortcuts

Before we get coding, let me tell you about some keyboard functions you are

Go on, try it now. Great isn't it? It's this level of usability which makes AMOS such a strong development tool. Just think, it was doing this back in the 90s, way before we got used to the concept of multi-tasking and switching between





simple program that prints a value to the screen from a defined variable within the program. We will then change the program to print a value that we input via the keyboard.

I like to have things organised, and I prefer to set up my coding environment properly from the start, meaning that if I need to make any changes to the program structure later on, then I already have the fundamentals taken care of.

To this end, let us start the program by defining the screen values; how big it will be, how many colours it will use, and what resolution we will set it at.

To this end, let us define the screen like this:

```
Screen Open 1, 320, 200, 16, Lowres
```

This command, **Screen Open**, opens up a new screen, in this instance, numbered "1".

The next two values are the size of the screen: in this case we are setting it to a standard Amiga screen size of 320 pixels wide by 200 high. Following that, there's the number of colours we will allow on the screen. Here we are setting it to 16 colours. And then the final value is the screen resolution.

Next up we want to make sure our screen is clean and tidy for use.

On the next line enter:

```
Cls
```

This will clear the screen.

Now with our screen ready, we can get to work.

Strings and variables

In order for this program to work, we need to define a variable to hold the value of some text that we want to display on the screen. In this instance, let's display the name of our favourite Amiga game.

Let's give our variable a meaningful name to reflect this. Let's call it `game$`. Note that the "\$" at the end of the name tells *AMOS* the value in this variable will be a text string value. Think of the "\$" as representing the word "string".

So we define our variable as this:

```
game$="Xenon Two"
```

Don't forget to use the quotation marks

around your text value. This specifies the boundaries of the text string.

What we are saying here is that the variable `game$` is holding the text "Xenon Two".

Go ahead and key in the above line then hit **Return** when done. *AMOS* will change the variable name to all uppercase. This is normal, so your line will now read:

```
GAME$="Xenon Two"
```

What does it do?

If you press **F2** now to check for any errors, *AMOS* will tell you if there is a problem with what you have entered. If an error is highlighted, read back through the above steps and double check your code.

Once all is well, hit **F1** to run the program. Unsurprisingly, *AMOS* will run the code and end after showing you a blank screen, because we've not put anything functional in the code yet. Nothing is happening with our variable outside of it being set.

Press **Enter** to return to the code listing, and let's continue.

Showing our variable

At the end of the code listing, we want to enter a line to show our variable on the screen. To do this we use the **Print** command.

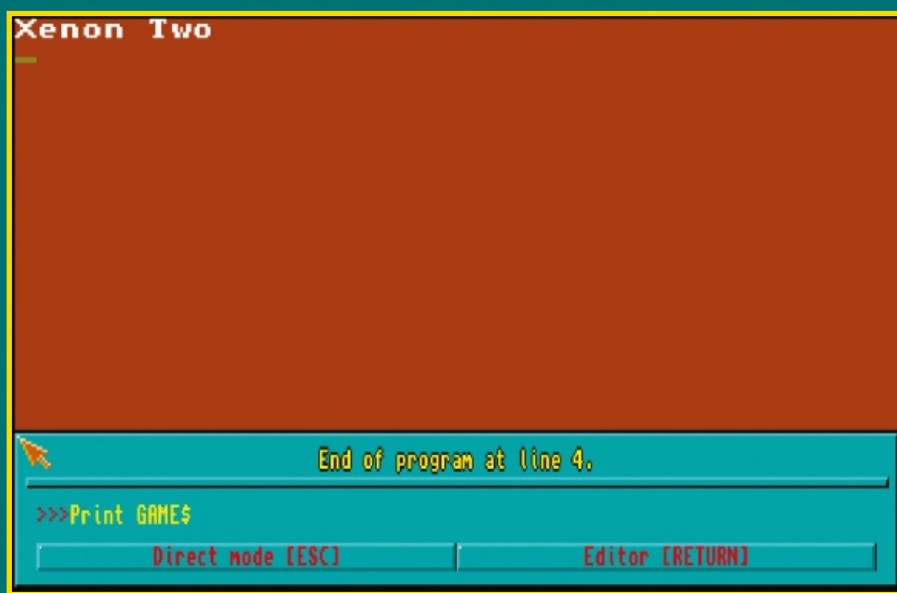
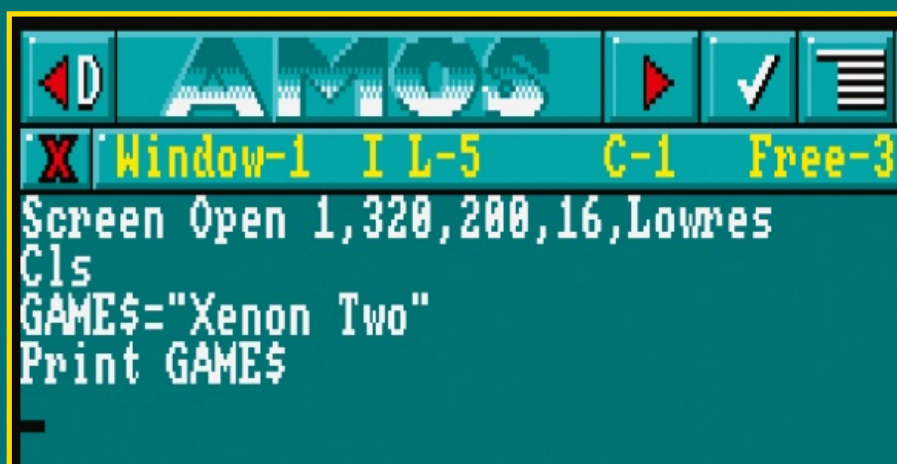
So enter this on a new line:

```
Print game$
```

Press **F2** to check your code, and hit **F1** to run it when all is ready. The program will run and you should see "Xenon Two" displayed on the screen. And the program will end.

Well done, you've completed your first *AMOS* program as part of this tutorial series!

Now this isn't going to set the world on fire, but looking back at what you have done, it's pretty major if you've not coded before. You've set up your environment, ►



defined a variable and its value, and displayed that to the screen. This is pretty much fundamental to all coding; create your world, define what you want to happen in it, and present the end results to the user.

Spicing things up

Nobody has the need for a program that always shows the same string value each time. Let's add some interactivity by asking the user to enter a string they'd like to see displayed on the screen. For this we will use the Input command.

Go back to the line where we defined the variable `game$`. Change it to:

```
game$=""
```

This effectively sets `game$` to be blank. If you run the program now, you'll see nothing is printed on the screen.

Now to get your program to ask for input:
type the following after the above line:

```
Print "What is your favourite Amiga
game?"
Input game$
```

This will take what a user enters via the keyboard, and assign it to the variable

What is your favourite Aniga game?
? Sensible Soccer
Sensible Soccer

End of program at line 6.

```
>>>Print GAMES
```

Direct mode [ESC]

Editor [RETURN]

what your favourite Amiga game is and press Enter.

This value should now be returned to the screen and displayed because the Print command has not changed. We're still showing the value of `game$`, as it doesn't matter where that value is set.

Wrapping up

To finish off, we'll save the program, and in doing so, introduce another keyboard

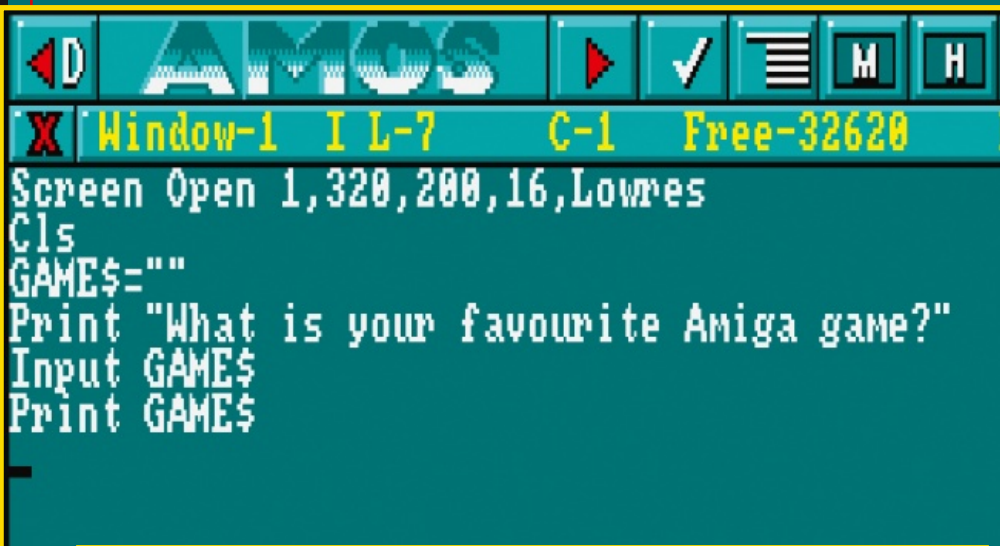
Choose a suitable place to store your *AMOS* code by navigating there by using the relevant Parent and Devices buttons.

On the empty line at the bottom of this dialogue box, give your program a name and save it, making sure you add the 'amos' suffix. I'm going to call my program "AA-tutorial-1.amos".

And that's it for now.

Next time we'll look at validating the value that is keyed into the screen, and displaying error messages. Along with this we'll look at using procedures in *AMOS* to make your code more fluid. We'll also see how we can save the inputted entry to disk too, but that is for later.

Thanks for reading, and I hope you'll be back for the next tutorial! 🌞



What is your favourite Aniga game?

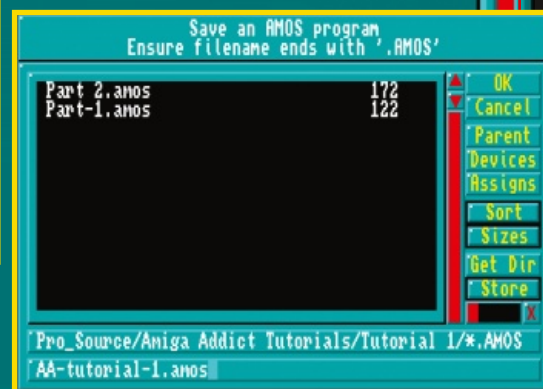
game\$. In this way we are getting the end user to define what game\$ holds.

Now when you run the program, you will see the question mark prompt on the screen to enter a value.

Go on, type something. Tell the program

shortcut you'll need to become familiar with.

While back in the code listing, press **Left Amiga + S** to save the program. This will bring up a save dialogue box. (Of course you can also go to the **File** menu and select **Save**, but this way is quicker.)



You can find Keith on Twitter as @yawning_angel, and he also makes AMOS videos on his fantastic YouTube channel www.youtube.com/@YawningAngelRetro.

STUDIO VIEWS



- by Stoo Cambridge

With all this talk of *LightWave* and 3D graphics, I thought, "Why not cross the Rubicon into the world of *Tron*?" Ahh... wouldn't that be something! I was 13 years old when it came out; technology was so new, so fresh and for a young east of London lad, TOMY handheld games were state of the art! I was very fortunate to see the film at the cinema, a film that I can honestly say changed my life.

Like many of my generation growing up in the late 70s/early 80s, I got to experience the microchip revolution with a sense of awe and wonder at what the future was beginning to shape up like. New frontiers, new worlds - and with it, new opportunities just waiting to be grasped. It was an incredibly exciting time to be alive.

Back then, owning one of these new 8-bit home computers was the ultimate prize, so when a movie came out taking you inside "The Computer System"... wow, it blew my mind, and was to fuel my creativity for the years that followed. *Tron* looked like nothing I'd ever seen before, yet managed to bridge that gap between the fantastical and the everyday relatable life of an 80s teen.

Pixels vs polygons

That sense of wonder and possibility has stayed with me since that moment in 1982, as I embarked on my journey into the world of computing, and more importantly, my journey as an artist. You would think with this influence that I would have been first in line to jump on the 3D bandwagon a few years later,

when *LightWave* first hit the Amiga. But to my hesitant regret, no. I watched in awe when any magazines of the time published these 3D images, yet my devotion to pixel art was my bread and butter, and I just didn't feel the need to deviate from it. I seem to recall dabbling with a "copy" of *LightWave*, but my machine was not quite fast enough to do any of that rendering malarkey, so my foray into Amiga 3D modelling ceased as speedily as it had started.

My first proper toe-dipping into the silicon-based third dimension was somewhere around late 1994/early 1995. I'd bought a home PC - a Gateway 2000 P120 system - as Sensible were about to start work on a game for the yet-to-be-released PlayStation 1. The game had a working title of *Office Chair Massacre*, but was later known as *Have a Nice Day*. My job was to create the level maps using the DOS-based *3D Studio 4* software. Armed with a few tutorial books, I jumped in at the deep end, so to speak, and thus my 3D journey began. If you know your Sensible history, you'll know the game got canned before it really had a chance to develop. This was a time when 2D pixel art was on the way out and 3D was in!

Low Blow

After I'd left Sensible, I found myself working again with 3D - this time on our own game, a game called *Joe Blow* (originally titled *D.J. Fresh*, prior to signing the publishing agreement). We opted to use *3D Studio Max* to create the levels, and for the character animations, we used *LightWave*.

Looking back with a more experienced eye, the decision to use two totally different software packages was crazy! The packages were like chalk and cheese, so sharing assets between them was far from easy. If I were to pick today, I'd have probably gone down the *LightWave* route, as it was cheaper to buy, more reliable and knowing what I know now, was just more solid than its Autodesk rival at that time.

3D today

On reflection, comparing what 3D software was capable of back then to what we have today, it's remarkable just how accessible it has become. Just take a look at something like *Blender* for example, which I currently use to do all my product renders for my shop site over at The Design Droid. I'm no 3D artist by the way, it's an area I have very little expertise in, and when I do need to work in 3D, it is done purely with the singular objective of one specific task... often after a few tutorial videos!

Blender is awesome, it's free to download and use, and offers an incredible amount of power, which in my opinion easily rivals the commercial stuff out there. But the most important thing of all is its accessibility. It makes you wonder what might have been, if Commodore had continued to develop the Amiga line with integrated 3D hardware. Software like *LightWave* I suspect would have stood shoulder to shoulder with these fictitious, fast, futuristic Amiga models. But to get that would be using the fourth dimension, not the third!

REGULARS



Tron's crisp CGI was mindblowing in the day.



Office Chair Massacre was our first attempt at 3D on the PS1.



Joe Blow used LightWave for the character animations.

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